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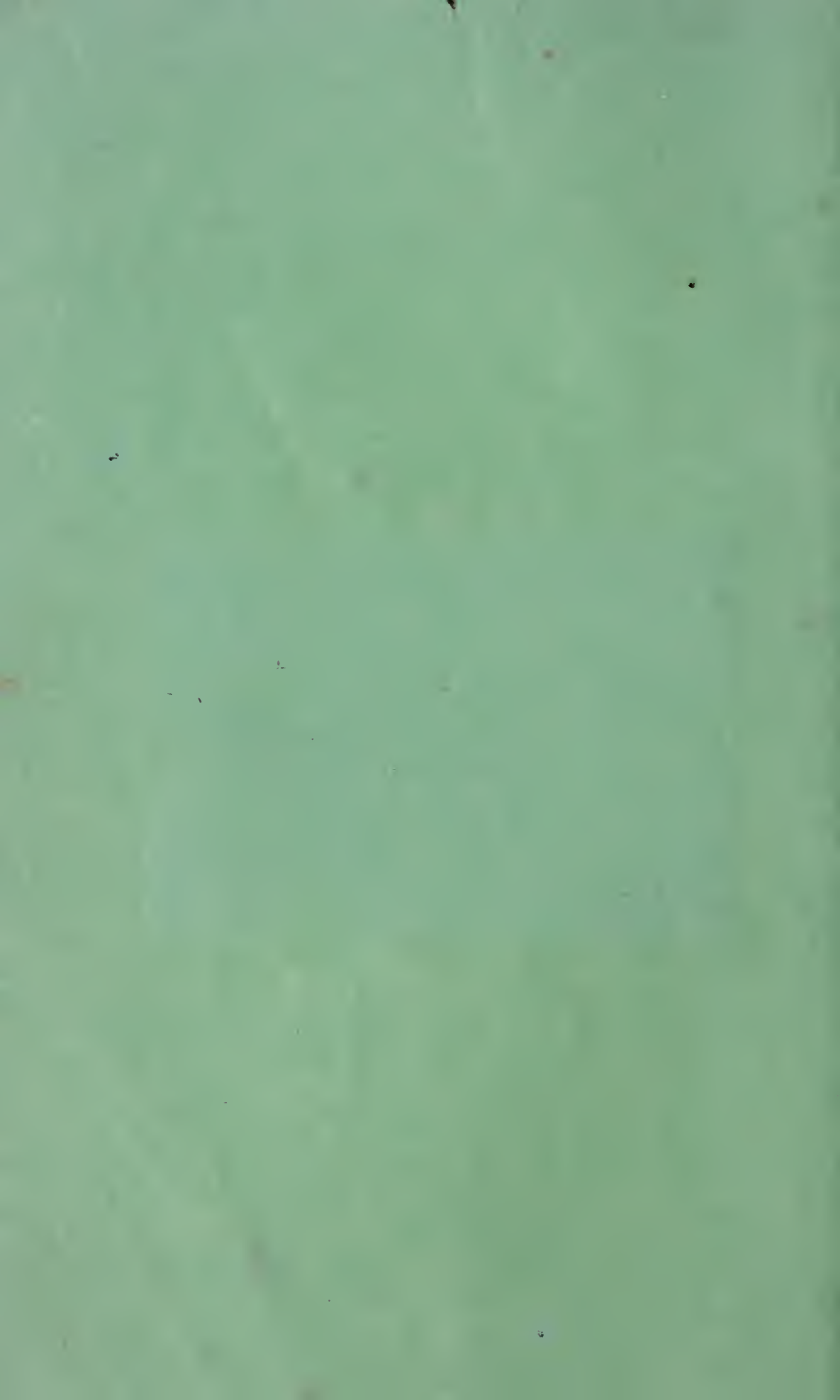


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HALLIWELL'S  
INTRODUCTION  
TO  
SHAKESPEARE'S  
**Midsummer Night's Dream.**

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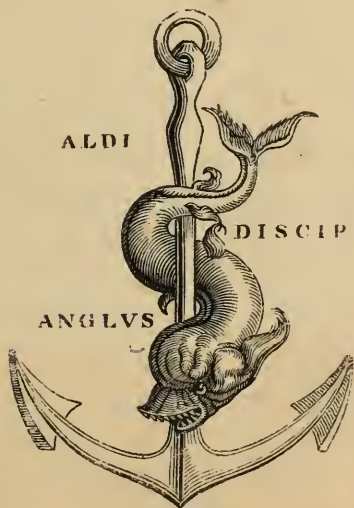


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AN INTRODUCTION  
TO SHAKESPEARE'S  
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

BY  
JAMES ORCHARD HALLIWELL, ESQ.  
F.R.S., HON. M.R.I.A., F.S.A., F.R.A.S.,  
ETC.

"Such sights as youthful poets dream  
On summer eves by haunted stream."



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## CHAPTER I.

“ Ah, can I tell  
The enchantment that afterwards befel ?  
Yet it was but a dream : yet such a dream ! ”

**I**T remains to be seen, whether the labours of former commentators have, as some imagine, exhausted all that proper and useful annotation on the works of Shakespeare, which the lapse of two centuries, and the continual change in our language and manners, have rendered necessary.

We shall not here pause to consider those, if any there be, who despise even the most minute illustration of the works of our great dramatist. The merits of those works are beyond the reach of criticism, in the common acceptation of the term, and an unanimous voice has pronounced every thing relating to them and their author, hallowed and sacred. The judgment of time has classed them amongst the noblest productions of human genius, and nothing now remains for us, but to hail them as the immortal progeny of an immortal author.

But the high privilege to which such an author may lay claim, by no means descends to his editors or commentators ; and we predict, that many years must yet elapse, ere that complete inquiry into Shakespeare's language and allusions, without which

the spirit of his writings can never be fully understood or appreciated, can be presented to the view of the general reader by means of a commentary. It is with this conviction, that we venture to place the following observations on one of the most remarkable of his plays before the notice of the public.

The very name of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has furnished a subject for discussion. The time of action is on the night preceding May-day. Theseus goes out a maying, and when he finds the lovers, he observes :—

“ No doubt they rose up early, to observe  
The rite of May.”

“ I am convinced,” says Coleridge, “ that Shakespeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout.” Such was no doubt the case, and may we not conclude, that the first idea of the play was conceived on *Midsummer Night*? Aubrey, in a passage, which refers perhaps to the character of Bottom the weaver, implies that its original was a constable at Grendon, in Buckinghamshire, and adds, “ I thinke it was *Midsummer Night*, that he, [i. e. Shakespeare,] happened to lye there.” The title doubtlessly refers to the whole piece, and not to any particular part of it. The poet himself says :—

“ If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended ;  
That you have but slumbered here,  
While these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme,  
*No more yielding but a dream,*  
Gentles, do not reprehend.”

In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia observes of Malvolio's



seeming frenzy, that it "is a very Midsummer madness;" and Steevens thinks that as "this time was anciently thought productive of mental vagaries, to that circumstance it might have owed its title." Heywood\* seems to allude to a similar belief, when he says—

"As mad as a March hare; where madness compares,  
Are not Midsummer hares as mad as March hares?"

Malone thinks that the title of the play was suggested by the season in which it was introduced on the stage. The misnomer, however, if it is one, does not imply a greater anachronism than several which the play itself presents. For instance, Theseus marries Hippolita on the night of the new moon; but how does this agree with the discourse of the clowns at the rehearsal?

"*Snug.* Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?"

*Bot.* A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanack; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

*Quin.* Yes, it doth shine that night.

*Bot.* Why, then you may leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement."

Again, the period of action is four days, concluding with the night of the new moon. But Hermia and Lysander receive the edict of Theseus four days before the new moon; they fly from Athens "to-morrow night;" they become the sport of the fairies, along with Helena and Demetrius, *during one night only*, for, Oberon accomplishes all in one night, before "the first cock crows;" and the lovers are discovered by Theseus the morning before

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\* Epigrammes upon Proverbs. 4to. Lond. 1567, No. 95.

that which would have rendered this portion of the plot chronologically consistent. For, although Oberon, addressing his queen, says,

“ Now thou and I are new in amity ;  
And will, *to-morrow midnight*, solemnly,  
Dance in Duke Theseus’ house triumphantly.”

yet Theseus, when he discovers the lovers, asks Egeus,

“ is not this the day  
That Hermia should give answer of her choice ? ”

and the answer of Egeus, “ It is, my Lord,” coupled with what Theseus says to Hermia in the first Act—

“ Take time to pause; and by the next new moon  
(The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,  
For everlasting bond of fellowship),  
Upon that day either prepare to die,  
For disobedience to your father’s will ;  
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would ;  
Or on Diana’s altar to protest,  
For aye, austerity and single life.”

proves that the action of the remaining part of the play is not intended to consist of two days.

The preparation and rehearsal of the interlude present similar inconsistencies. In Act i., Sc. 2, Quince is the only one who has any knowledge of the “ most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe,” and he selects actors for Thisby’s mother, Pyramus’s father, and Thisby’s father, none of whom appear in the interlude itself. In Act iii., Sc. 1, we have the commencement of the play in rehearsal, none of which appears in the piece itself. Again, the play could have been but partially rehearsed once; for Bottom only returns in time to advise “ every man look o’er his part ; ” and



immediately before his companions were lamenting the failure of their "sport." How then could the "merry tears" of Philostrate be shed at its rehearsal?

But all these merely tend to prove that Shakespeare wrote with no classical rules before him, and do not in the least detract from the most beautiful poetical drama in this or any other language. Shakespeare was truly the child of nature, and when we find Hermia, contemporary with Theseus, swearing

"by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,  
When the false Trojan under sail was seen."

the anachronism is so palpable to any one of classical acquirements, that the evident conclusion is, that we must receive his works as the production of a genius unfettered by the knowledge of more philosophical canons, and of a power which enabled the bard to create, assisted only by the then barren field of his country's literature, that which "was not of an age, but for all time." This, we are convinced, must be the conclusion of all who read the works of Shakespeare in a proper spirit, unbiassed by the prejudices of a prosaic age; and it is only then that they can really hear him, as

"Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild."

## CHAPTER II.

*Ὡς ου κρινουμαι τωνδε σοι τα πλειονα.*

**M**ALONE and Knight have assigned the composition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the year 1594. We suppose this play to have been written in the autumn of that year, and we believe we can bring better evidence than has yet been adduced.

Dr. Simon Forman, the celebrated astrologer, has given us in MS. No. 384 in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, the following important observations on the year 1594 :—

“ Ther was moch sicknes but lyttle death, moch fruit and many plombs of all sorts this yeare and small nuts, but fewe walnuts. This monethes of June and July were very wet and wonderfull cold like winter, that the 10. dae of Julii many did syt by the fyer, yt was so cold; and soe was yt in Maye and June; and scarce too fair dais together all that tyme, but yt rayned every day more or lesse. Yf yt did not raine, then was yt cold and cloudye. Mani murders were done this quarter. There were many gret fludes this sommer, and about Michelmas, thorowe the abundaunce of raine that fell sodeinly; the brige of Ware was broken downe, and at Stratford Bowe, the water was never seen so byg as yt was; and in the latter end of October, the waters burste downe the bridg at Cambridge. In Bark-

shire were many gret waters, wherewith was moch harm done sodenly.”—MS. Ashm. 384, fol. 105.

Now this minute piece of meteorological information, so much more satisfactory than any yet in print, will be found to agree exactly with the complaint of Titania in the following speech addressed to Oberon :

“ These are the forgeries of jealousy ;  
 And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,  
 By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,  
 Or on the beached margent of the sea,  
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.  
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
 Contagious fogs ; which, falling in the land,  
 Have every pelting river made so proud,  
 That they have overborne their continents :  
 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,  
 The ploughman lost his sweat ; and the green corn  
 Hath rotted, ere his youth attain'd a beard :  
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
 The crows are fatted with the murrain flock ;  
 The nine-men's morris is fill'd up with mud ;  
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,  
 For lack of tread, are undistinguishable ;  
 The human mortals want their winter here ;  
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest.  
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,  
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,\*  
 That rheumatic diseases do abound.  
 And thorough this distemperature, we see  
 The seasons alter : hoary-headed frosts  
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose ;  
 And on old Hiems' chin and icy crown,  
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
 Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the summer,

---

\* “ The moone gathereth deawe in the aire, for she printeth the vertue of hir moysture in the aire, and chaungeth the ayre in a manner that is unseene, and breedeth and gendereth deaw in the upper part thereof.”—*Bartholomæus by Glanville*, 1582, fol. 133.

The childing autumn, angry winter, change  
 Their wonted liveries ; and the 'mazed world,  
 By their increase, now knows not which is which :  
 And this same progeny of evils comes  
 From our debate, from our dissension ;  
 We are their parents and original."

It will be remembered that the phrase "rheumatic diseases" is not here used in its modern acceptation. Colds, coughs, &c. were included under this class of complaints, and their prevalence agrees with Forman's statement,—“ther was moch sicknes but lyttle death.”

Forman's account is, indeed, altogether too remarkably similar to Shakespeare's to have been the result of chance. No one, we think, can read them both without being convinced that they relate to one and the same period. In pursuing this argument, we shall not perhaps be blamed for hinting at the possibility of the plenty of nuts, as mentioned by Forman, having suggested Titania's offer of “new nuts” to Bottom (Act iv. Sc. 1); and “new nuts” could scarcely have been procured at any other season than autumn.

“This yere,” says Stowe the Chronicler, “in the month of May, fell many great showers of rain, but in the months of June and July much more ; for it commonly rained every day or night till St. James' day, and two days after together most extremely ; all which notwithstanding, in the month of August, there followed a fair harvest, but in the month of September fell great rains, which raised high waters, such as stayed the carriages, and broke down bridges at Cambridge, Ware, and elsewhere in many places.”

Steevens has quoted the following from Churchyard's *Charitie*, published in 1595, although he



does not seem to be aware that the author of course alludes to the preceding year :—

“ A colder time in world was never seene :  
The skies do lowre, the sun and moone wax dim ;  
Sommer scarce knowne, but that the leaves are greene.  
The winter's waste drives water ore the brim ;  
Upon the land great flotes of wood may swim.  
Nature thinks scorne to do hir dutie right,  
Because we have displeasde the Lord of Light.”

Churchyard, as Steevens observes, was not enumerating, on this occasion, fictitious, but real misfortunes. He wrote the present poem to excite charity on his own behalf; and among his other sufferings very naturally dwelt on the coldness of the season, which his poverty had rendered the less supportable.

It is remarkable that Churchyard, in the preface to the above-mentioned volume, states that “ a great nobleman told me this last wet sommer, the weather was too colde for poets.” How singular that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* should have been written at such a time! Would that some of our modern poets could be induced to profit by the hint.

Chetwood, in his work entitled “ *The British Theatre*,” 12mo. Dublin, 1750, has given a list of titles and dates of the early editions of Shakespeare's Plays, among which we find “ A moste pleasaunte comedie, called *A Midsummer Night's Dreame*, wythe the freakes of the fayries,” stated to have been published in the year 1595. No copy either with this date or under this title has yet been discovered. It is, however, necessary to state, that Steevens and others have pronounced many of the titles which Chetwood has given to be fictitious.

In an old comedy called, *The Wisdome of Doctor*

*Dodypoll*, first printed in 1600, but known to have been written as early as 1596, occurs a passage, which is conjectured by Steevens, to have been borrowed from a similar passage in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* :—

“ ’Twas I that lead you through the painted meades,  
Where the light fairies daunst upon the flowers,  
*Hanging on every leaf an orient pearle,*  
Which, strooke together with the silken winde,  
Of their loose mantels made a silver chime.”

There is another allusion in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which may hereafter be found to be corroborative of the date to which we have assigned its composition. But of this more particularly in another chapter.

Early in the year 1598, appeared Meres' *Wit's Treasury, being the Second Part of Wit's Commonwealth*, in which (fol. 282) he mentions A *Midsummer Night's Dream* of Shakespeare. It was probably not then a new performance, or it could scarcely have found its way into Meres' list. This is the only direct notice of it we possess, previously to the publication of two small quarto editions in the year 1600, one printed “for Thomas Fisher,” and the other, “printed by James Roberts.” We think there can be little doubt, on an examination of these editions, that Fisher's is the genuine one, and the earliest.\* It was entered at Stationer's Hall on the

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\* For the sake of the bibliomaniac, we may state, that Fisher's edition is very rare and difficult to meet with. Steevens' copy, which was imperfect, sold for the sum of £25 10s., and Heber's copy, a remarkable fine one, produced thirty-six pounds. The edition by Roberts is comparatively common, and worth from five to ten pounds.

8th October, the same year. The play was not reprinted after 1600, till it was inserted in the folio of 1623; and the text in that edition differs very slightly from that in the preceding quartos.

### CHAPTER III.

“The characters in *The Midsummer Night's Dream* are classical, but the costume is strictly Gothic, and shews that it was through the medium of Romance that he drew the knowledge of them.”—*Letter on Shakespeare's authorship of the Two Noble Kinsmen.*

CHAUCER'S *Knight's Tale* has long been considered as the source whence Shakespeare derived the hint of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We have a few general observations to offer on the sources of this play, at the same time expressing our firm conviction, that the plot as a whole, was one of the “heirs of his own invention.”

Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, the *Legende of Thisbe of Babylon*, by the same author, and Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, were all well known to Shakespeare, and together furnished materials for the basis of this play.

From the first of these, several corresponding extracts have been given by the commentators, but they appear to have overlooked the following passage, which occurs nearly at the end of the *Knight's Tale*, and may have furnished Shakespeare with the idea of introducing an interlude at the end of his play:—

“ne how the Grekes play  
The wake-plaies ne kepe I not to say :

Who wrestled best naked, with oile enoint,  
 Ne who that bare him best in no disjoint.  
 I woll not tellen eke how they all gon  
 Hom till Athenes whan the play is don."

The introduction of the clowns and their interlude was perhaps an afterthought.

Again, in the Knight's Tale, we have this passage,

" Duke Theseus, with all his cumpany,  
 Is comin home to Athenes the cité,  
 With alle bliss, and grete solempnité."

which bears too remarkable a resemblance to what Theseus says in the Midsummer Night's Dream, to have been accidental:—

" Away with us, to Athens : Three and three,  
 We'll hold a feast in great solemnity."

In the Legende of Thisbe of Babylon, we read,—

" Thus would thei saine, alas ! thou wicked wal,  
 Thorough thine envie thou us lettist al."

which is certainly similar to the following line in Pyramus's address to Wall:—

" O wicked Wall, through whom I see no bliss !"

Golding's translation of Ovid was published in 1567, and the many similarities between the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe as there related and Shakespeare's interlude, satisfactorily prove the source of the latter. We give the whole passage, and let the reader judge for himself:—

" Within the towne (of whose huge walles so monstrous high and  
 thicke,  
 The fame is given Semiramis for making them of bricke.)  
 Dwelt hard together two young folke in houses joynde so nere,



That under all one rooffe well nie both twaine conveyed were,  
The name of him was *Pyramus*, and Thisbe called was she ;  
So faire a man in all the East was none alive as he,  
Nor nere a woman, mayde, nor wife, in beautie like to her.  
This neigh-brod bred acquaintance first, this neigh-brod first did  
ster

The secret sparkes : this neigh-brod first an entrance in did show  
For love, to come to that to which it afterward did grow.  
And if that right had taken place they had beene man and wife ;  
But still their parents went about to let which (for their life)  
They could not let. For both their hearts with equal flame did  
burne ;

No man was privie to their thoughts. And for to serve their  
turne,

Instead of talke they used signes : the closlier they suppress  
The fire of love, the fiercer still it raged in their brest.  
The wall that parted house from house had riven therein a cranie,  
Which shroonke at making of the wall : this fault not markt of  
anie

Of many hundred yeeres before (what doth not love espie ?)  
These lovers first of all found out, and made a way whereby  
To talke together secretly, and through the same did go  
Their loving whisprings very light and safely to and fro.  
Now, as at one side *Pyramus*, and *Thisbe* on the tother,  
Stood often drawing one of them the pleasant breath from other :  
O thou envious wall (they sayed), why letst thou lovers thus ;  
What matter were it if that thou permitted both of us  
In armes each other to embrace : or if thou think that this  
Were over-much, yet mightest thou at least make roome to kisse.  
And yet thou shalt not finde us churles : we thinke our selves in  
det,

For the same piece of curtesie, in vouching safe to let  
Our sayings to our friendly eares thus freely come and go.  
Thus having where they stood in vaine complained of their wo,  
When night drew neare they bad adue, and ech gave kisses  
sweete,

Unto the parget on their side the which did never meete.  
Next morning with her cheerefull light had driven the starres aside,  
And Phœbus with his burning beames the dewie grasse had dride,  
These lovers at their wonted place by fore-appointment met,  
Where, after much complaint and mone they covenanted to get  
Away from such as watched them, and in the evening late  
To steale out of their father's house, and eke the citie gate.  
And to th' intent that in the fields they strayd not up and downe,  
They did agree at Ninus Tombe to meet without the towne,  
And tary underneath a tree that by the same did grow :  
Which was a faire high mulberie with fruite as white as snow,

Hard by a coole and trickling spring. This bargaine pleased them both.

And so day-light (which to their thought away but slowly goth) Did in the ocian fall to rest, and night from thence did rise. As soone as darkenesse once was come, straight *Thisbe* did devise A shift to winde her out of doores, that none that were within Perceived her: and muffling her with clothes about her chin, That no man might discerne her face, to *Ninus Tombe* she came Unto the tree: and set her downe there underneath the same. Love made her bold. But see the chance; there comes be-  
smerde with blood,

About the chappes, a lyonesse all foming from the wood, From slaughter lately made of kine, to staunch her bloody thirst With water of the foresaid spring. Whom *Thisbe* spying first, Afarre by moone-light, thereupon with fearfull steps gan flie, And in a darke and yrkesome cave did hide herselfe thereby. And as she fled away for haste she let her mantle fall, The which for feare she left behinde not looking backe at all. Now when the cruell lyonesse her thirst had staunched well, In going to the wood she found the slender weede that fell From *Thisbe*, which with bloodie teeth in peeces he did teare: The night was somewhat further spent ere *Pyramus* came there, Who seeing in the suttle sand the print of lyon's paw, Waxt pale for feare. But when also the bloodie cloke he saw All rent and torne: one night (he sayd) shall lovers two con-  
found,

Of which long life deserved she of all that live on ground;  
My soule deserves of this mischaunce the perill for to beare.  
I, wretch, have been the death of thee, which to this place of  
feare

Did cause thee in the night to come, and came not there before. My wicked lims and wretched guts, with cruell teeth therefore, Devoure ye, O ye Lyons all that in this rocke doe dwell. But cowards use to wish for death. The slender weede that fell From *Thisbe* up he takes, and straight doth beare it to the tree, Which was appointed erst the place of meeting for to bee. And when he had bewept, and kist the garment which he knew, Receive thou my blood too (quoth he); and therewithall he drew His sword, the which among his guts he thrust, and by and bie Did draw it from the bleeding wound, beginning for to die, And cast himselfe upon his backe, the blood did spinne on hie, As when a conduite pipe is crackt, the water bursting out Doth shote it selfe a great way off, and pierse the ayre about, The leaves that were upon the tree besprinkled with his blood, Were died black. The roote also bestained as it stood, A deepe dark purple colour straight upon the berries cast, Anon scarce ridded of her feare with which she was agast

For doubt of disapoynting him comes *Thisbe* forth in hast,  
 And for her lover lookes about, rejoycing for to tell  
 How hardly she had scapt that night the danger that befell.  
 And as she knew right well the place and facion of the tree,  
 (As which she saw so late before :) even so when she did see  
 The colour of the berries turn'd, she was uncertaine whither  
 It were the tree at which they both agreed to meet together.  
 While in this doubt full stound she stood, she cast her eye aside,  
 And there beweltred in his blood hir lover she espide,  
 Lie sprawling with his dying lims : at which she started backe,  
 And looked pale as any box, a shuddring through her stracke,  
 Even like the sea which suddenly with whissing noyse doth move,  
 When with a little blast of wind it is but toucht above.  
 But when approching nearer him she knew it was her love,  
 She beate her brest, she shrieked out, she tare her golden heares,  
 And taking him betweene her armes did wash his woundes with  
 teares.

She meynd her weeping with his blood, and kissing all his face,  
 (Which now became as cold as yse) she cryde in wofull case,  
 Alas, what chaunce my *Pyramus* hath parted thee and mee.  
 Make answer, O my *Pyramus* : it is thy *Thisb.* even shee  
 Whom thou doost love most hartily that speaketh unto thee,  
 Give eare and raise thy heavie head. He hearing *Thisbes* name,  
 Lift up his dying eyes, and having seene her, closd the same.  
 But when she knew her mantle there, and saw his scaberd lie  
 Without the sworde : Unhappy man, thy love hath made thee die :  
 Thy love (she said) hath made thee slea thyselfe. This hand of  
 mine

Is strong inough to doe the like. My love no lesse than thine  
 Shall give me force to worke my wound, I will pursue thee dead,  
 And wretched woman as I am, it shall of me be sed  
 That like as of thy death I was the onely cause and blame,  
 So am I thy companion eke and partner in the same.  
 For death which onely could alas asunder part us twaine,  
 Shall never so dissever us but we will meete againe.  
 And you the parents of us both, most wretched folke alive,  
 Let this request that I shall make in both our names belive,  
 Intreate you to permit, that we whom chaste and stedfast love,  
 And whom even death hath joyned in one, may as it doth behove  
 In one grave be together layd. And thou unhappie tree  
 Which shouldest now the corse of one, and shalt anon through mee  
 Shroude two, of this same slaughter hold the sicker sinnes for ay,  
 Blacke be the colour of thy fruite and mourning like alway,  
 Such as the murder of us twaine may evermore bewray.  
 This said, she tooke the sword yet warme with slaughter of her love,  
 And setting it beneath her brest did to the heart it shove.  
 Her prayer with the Gods and with their parents tooke effect,



For when the fruite is thoroughly ripe, the berrie is bespect  
With colour tending to a blacke. And that which after fire  
Remained, rested in one tombe as *Thisbe* did desire."

We may add, that most of the classical allusions in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* are to be found in the book we have just quoted. In point of fact, classical allusions were much more general and popular in Shakespeare's age than at the present, and scarcely a ballad can be found of the time of Queen Elizabeth, that does not refer to some tale of antiquity. The fates of *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*, now confined to the boys of public schools, was then a subject of popular sympathy. Mr. Collier has printed a ballad entitled "*The Panges of Love and Loves Fittes*," in which the unhappy fate of the two lovers is again deplored:—

" What say you then to *Piramus*,  
That promised his love to mete,  
And founde by fortune merveilous,  
A bloudie cloth before his feete?  
For *Tysbies* sake hymselfe he slewe,  
Ladie! Ladie!  
To prove that he was a lover trewe,  
My dear Ladie!"

And, indeed, who can accuse Shakespeare of having taken directly from the classic writers, when there are, in fact, fewer classical allusions and imitations in his plays than in many of those of his contemporaries? *Whalley*,\* we believe, was the first who pointed out the similarity between the opening speech of *Theseus*:

" Now, fair *Hippolyta*, our nuptial hour  
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in

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\* *On the Learning of Shakespeare*, 8vo. Lond. 1748, p. 55. He is followed by *Malone*.

Another moon ; but oh, methinks, how slow  
 This old moon wanes ! she lingers my desires,  
 Like to a stepdame, or a dowager,  
 Long withering out a young man's revenue."

and the following passage in the epistles of Ovid :—

—“ Ut piger annus  
 Pupillis, quos dura premit custodia matrum :  
 Sic mihi tarda fluunt ingrataque tempora."

But surely the translation of this, as given by Drant in 1567, is more similar to Shakespeare's:

“ Slowe seames the yeare unto the warde  
 Which houlden downe must be,  
 In custodie of stepdame strait,—  
 Slowe slydes the time to me."

The word *dowager*, as Mr. Knight observes, is here used in the original sense of a widow receiving *dower* out of the revenue which has descended to the heir with this customary charge. Slender, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act i. Sc. 1, alludes to this custom :—  
 “ I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead.” Stepdames were, indeed, seldom looked upon by the youths under their charge with any degree of affection ; their severity is thus mentioned by Barnfeild, in his *Complaint of Poetrye*, 1598 :—

“ Then, if a stony heart must thee inter,  
 Go find a stepdame or a usurer."

We are now proceeding to offer a new conjecture to our readers, which was first suggested by perusing the following old ballad, preserved, with other black-letter broadsides, in the library of the Society of Antiquaries. It was written, as appears from a colophon, by T. Hedley, and “ imprinted at London

by Hary Sutton, dwellyng in Poules Churchyard," and therefore considerably before the earliest date that could be assigned to any of Shakespeare's plays. It was probably reprinted.

*" Of such as on fantesye, decree and discus  
On other men's works, lo, Ovid's tale thus !*

" Rude Pan wold nedes one day in companie,  
Compare to mend Apollo's melodye,  
And toke his homlie pipe and gan to blo ;  
The gentil God, that saw his rudnes so,  
Although himselfe knewe how for to excell,  
Contented stode, to here his conning well.  
Pan played and played boystiouslye,  
Apollo played but much melodiously,  
And such a tune wyth such musicke gave,  
As wel became hys knowledge for to have ;  
Midas stode by to judge, and to decre  
Whych of them both should best in musycke be ;  
And as he herde Pan playe and use hys song,  
He thought it such as he had lyked long,  
And wonted was to here of others oft ;  
Apollo's harpe and song went very soft,  
And swete and straunge, as none might sweter be,  
But yet, thought Midas, thys musycke lykes not me.  
And therfore strayght ful loude he cried and said,  
' Pan to myne eares of both hath better plaied.'  
Quoth then Apollo, ' syns thus thou demest Pan,  
Me to excel, that God of connyng am,  
And so doest judge of thynges thou canst no skyll,  
Midas henceforth, lo ! thus to the I wyll ;  
Thou shalte have eares to shewe and tell I wys,  
Both what thy skyll and what thy reason is ;  
Whych on thy head shall stande and wytnes be,  
Howe thou haste judged thys rurall God and me.  
Nay, be content, for I have it sayd.'  
A full sad man stood Mydas then dismayde,  
And as he felt to trye if it so was,  
He found he had two eares as hath an asse,  
Newly growen out wheras hys own eares stode.  
Sore chaunged then his collour and his moode,  
But yet for thie, havynge no worde to say,  
He shooke hys eares and sadly went hys waye.  
I know no more, but thys I wot and know,  
That tho the Phrigian Kyng be buryed lo,

And both hys eares eke wyth hym hydden be,  
 And so far worne that no man shall them se,  
 Syns such there are that lyve at thys day yet,  
 Whych have hys skyl, hys judgement, and his wit,  
 And take upon them both to judge and know,  
 To them I wyshe even thus, and to no mo,  
 That as they have hys judgement and hys yeares,  
 Even so I would they had hys fayre long eares."

We consider this tale of the transformation of the ears of Midas to have furnished Shakespeare with the notion of causing a similar change to take place in the appearance of Bottom the weaver. We would be understood not to refer to any portion of his plot, but merely to the single idea of the transformation; and even if our conjecture be right, we think it possible that Shakespeare might only have been influenced in his choice by a slight recollection of it.

The only verbal similarity is in the last line of the ballad—

" Even so I would they had hys *fayre long eares*."

and Titania's invitation to the Weaver—

" Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,  
 While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,  
 And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,  
 And kiss thy *fair large ears*, my gentle joy."

There is perhaps nothing very remarkable in this coincidence; but let us read a little further on:—

" *Tita*. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

*Bot*. I HAVE A REASONABLE GOOD EAR IN MUSIC: let us have the tongs and the bones."

How pointless is Bottom's answer taken separately, and yet how full of rich satire and humour, if the speaker be considered a second Midas! Bot-



tom had not, like Midas, received the asses head, as a punishment for his presumption, ignorance, and self-conceit; but, even in that point of view, the metamorphosis would have been justifiable; and, at the risk of being thought to overstep the bounds of probability, we are glad to convict our poet of one very good joke.\*

The tale of Midas is of course to be found in Golding's Ovid, a book with which Shakespeare was, beyond all doubt, very intimately acquainted. The ballad we have given, moreover, if it fail to convince our readers of the correctness of the view we have taken, will serve as a striking example of the popular manner in which the mythological tales of the ancients were then made current among all classes.

Before we change the subject, we will take the opportunity of saying a few words relative to the character of Bottom the weaver. There is a connexion between this name and the trade, which the obsolescence of the term has caused to escape the commentators. A ball of thread wound upon any cylindrical body was formerly called A BOTTOM OF THREAD. How appropriate a name then for a weaver! We can furnish our readers with an allusion to this mode of designation. It occurs in a rare little book, called *Grange's Garden*, 4to. Lond. 1577:—

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\* L'Estrange has the following fable:—"There was a question started betwixt a cuckoo and a nightingale, which of the two had the better voice, and the better way of singing. It came at last to a trial of skill, and an ass was to be the judge; who, upon hearing both sides, gave it clearly for the cuckoo."—*Fables*, Edit. 1694, No. 414.



“ A *bottom* for your silke it seemes,  
 My letters are become,  
 Whiche, with oft winding off and on,  
 Are wasted whole and some.”

Nick Bottom was the name of our weaver. We suspect, from the following contemporary epigram, that the first name was common for professors of that trade:—

“ Nicke, the weaver’s boy, is dead and gone,  
 Surely his life was but a thrume.” \*

Our readers will immediately call to mind the invocation of Bottom, in the part of Pyramus, while reciting his “ last dying speech:”—

“ O fates ! come, come ;  
 Cut thread and thrum.”

Bottom appears to have been of Aristotle’s opinion, that the chief end of tragedy is to raise terror. “ I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.” This may perhaps be an allusion to Martin Slaughter’s play of Hercules, now lost, but written about 1594 ; or it may more probably refer to a “ mask of Greek worthies ;” and we find, in a list † of properties for such a masque, the following entry, “ a great clobb for one of them representing Hercules, 4s.” It is difficult to say whether the verses which Bottom uses are an actual quotation or a burlesque, but probably the latter:—

\* We find this in a work, entitled *Pieces of Ancient Poetry from Unpublished Manuscripts and Scarce Books*, edited by Fry, 4to. Bristol, 1814, p. 15.

† Kempe’s Loseley Manuscripts, p. 87.

“The raging rocks,  
 And shivering shocks,  
 Shall break the locks  
 Of prison gates :  
 And Phibbus’ car  
 Shall shine from far,  
 And make and mar  
 The foolish fates.”

In 1581, a translation of one of Seneca’s plays, entitled *Hercules*, by John Studley, was published. It is so bombastically rendered, that we are inclined to think it may be the original of the above, especially as similarities may be found. For instance, take the commencing lines :—

“O Lorde of ghostes ! whose fyrye flashe  
 That forth thy hande doth shake,  
 Doth cause the trembling lodges twayne,  
 Of Phœbus’ carre to shake.  
 Raygne reachlesse nowe : in every place  
 Thy peace procurde I have,  
 Aloffe where Nereus lookes up lande,  
 Empalde in winding wave.”

And again,

“The roring rocks have quaking sturd,  
 And none thereat hath pusht ;  
 Hell gloumy gates I have brast oape,  
 Where grisly ghosts all husht  
 Have stood.”—

Shakespeare, however, may allude to some production nearer his own time, and it is very possible that the burlesque may be general.

## CHAPTER IV.

“ Hail, bright Titania !

Why standest thou idle on these flowery banks ?

Oberon is dancing with his Dryades :

I'll gather daisies, primrose, violets,

And bind them in a verse of poesy.”

**T**YRWHITT was of opinion that the Pluto and Proserpina of Chaucer's Merchant's Tale were the true progenitors of Oberon and Titania ; and in this conjecture he is followed by Malone. We believe Shakespeare to have formed his beautiful creations out of the popular fairy mythology of the age.

Much has been said and written on the source of the fairy drama, as exhibited in the Midsummer Night's Dream. Some writers have even gone to the early literature of Wales.\* We prefer confining our researches to a field that Shakespeare himself might have had an opportunity of access.

Fairies were then so woven into the popular belief, and were supposed to exert so wide and general an influence, that Shakespeare considered it no

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( \* With all due respect for Welsh literature, we certainly must say that the idea of its being the origin of romance and of fairy land is not very probable. ) We have heard that the following note was once discovered on the side of a Welsh pedigree roll—“ About this time the world was created ;” but we were never inclined to believe the anecdote until we found the following entry in the “ inventory of Mr. Morgan, shentleman,” in MS. Harl. 2127 :—“ One pedegree *since before Adame* to shoe the antiquitte of hur shentilitte.”

absolute anomaly to introduce them at Athens in the time of Theseus. Fairies were beings that always existed, whose presence was not confined to one quarter or part of the world. Would they not, therefore, be properly introduced into a drama of this nature? We cannot for a moment think that Shakespeare ever considered whether the inhabitants of Greece believed in the existence of Fairies, or whether the subjects of Theseus were ever haunted by them. No, he was writing for a people that believed, or knew that others believed in their universal existence; and we know enough of Shakespeare's originals, to be convinced that he seldom, if ever, cared for raising a substantial foundation of correct minute facts like these.

It would answer no useful purpose, as far as we can see, to enter into any discussion of the fairy mythology of Greece. In what important particulars do the fairies of Greece, as described by Allatius, or the *καλαι των ορειων* of Psellus, differ from those of England? We do not think that we should be affording illustration to Shakespeare's play, in attempting to prove the source of the latter. The account given by Allatius, however, agrees very remarkably with the beings of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. They haunted especially shady trees, and might frequently be seen dancing their rounds beside the cool streams which watered the woody dales. They sometimes fell in love with handsome young men, and they were extremely fond of little children, often carrying them away, and educating them amongst themselves. Many people had seen them, sometimes dancing, at other times, two engaged in



conversation under the shade of a tree, or one or more wandering about the woods or meadows.\*

One thing appears probable, that Shakespeare seems to have considered one of the fairy haunts to be in the eastern bounds of India. Titania thus taunts Oberon :—

“ Then I must be thy lady. But I know  
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,  
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,  
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love  
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,  
*Come from the farthest steep of India?*  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskined mistress and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded; and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity.”

Titania, we are told,

“ as her attendant, hath  
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king,”

which is not, however, very easily reconcilable with Titania's own account of the boy's mother, “ in the spiced Indian air, by night.”

Lane, in his Triton's Trumpet, speaks of the “ land of faerie ;” and as this poem has never been printed, we may, perhaps, be justified in introducing the following extract :—

“ From Faerie Lande, I com, quoth Danus now.  
Ha ! that quoth June mee never chaunced to knowe,  
Ne could or would th'igh poet Spencer tell,  
(So farr as mote my witt this ridle spell)  
Though none that breatheth livinge aier doth knowe,

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\* See an interesting paper on the popular superstitions of modern Greece, in Frazer's Magazine for February, 1835, written by Thomas Wright, Esq. M.A., &c.

Wheare is that happie land of Faerie,  
 Which I so oft doe vaunt yet no wheare showe,  
 But vouch antequities which nobodie maie knowe.  
 No marveile that, quoth Danus mirrelie,  
 For it is movable of Mercurie,  
 Which Faeries with a trice doe snatch up hence,  
 Fro sight and heering of the common sense;  
 Yet coms on sodaines to the thoughtlesse eye  
 And eare (favored to heere theire minstrelsy),  
 Ne bootes climbe promontories yt to spie,  
 For then the Faeries dowl the seeinge eye.  
 Onlie right sold it to some fewe doth chaunce,  
 That (ravishd) they behold it in a traunse,  
 Wheare yt a furor calls, rage, extacie,  
 Shedd but on the poetick misterie,  
 Which they with serious apprehension tend,  
 Ells from them also yt dothe quicklie wend:  
 But caught! with it they deale most secretly,  
 As deignes the Muse instruct them waerely.  
 The glorie wheareof doth but this arive,  
 They farr more honord dead are then alive.  
 But now folke vaunt by use, to call yt prittie,  
 Themselves theareby comparinge with (?) more wittie  
 Nathlesse kinges, captaines, clercks, astrologers,  
 And everie learnd th'ideal spirit admires.  
 But ah! well fare his lines alive not dead!  
 Yf of his readers his reward bee bread.  
 Which proves, while poets thoughts up sore divine,  
 These fleshe flies, earth wormes, welter but in slyme.  
 Ha! yet near known was, but meere poetrie,  
 Came to ann ancor at sadd povertie."

*MS. Bibl. Reg. 17. B xv.*

Be it where it may, the abode of Pliny's pigmies  
 may have originated the locus of the fairies in "the  
 farthest steep of India." We rest our conjecture on  
 the following extract from a popular work, at the same  
 time, not daring to hint that there ever was the slight-  
 est similarity between the men of one cubit, and the  
*καλαι αρχοντισαι* of Shakespeare or of Greece:—

"Pigmei be little men of a cubite long, and the Greekes call  
 them Pigmeos, and they dwell in mountaines of Inde, and the  
 sea of ocean is nigh to them, as Papias sayth. And Austen  
 sayth in this wise, that pigmei bee unneth a cuibite long, and

bee perfect of age in the thirde yeare, and ware old in the seaventh yere, and it is said, that they fight with cranes. Lib. 7. ca. 3. Plinius speaketh of Pigmeis, and sayth, that pigmei be armed in yron, and overcome cranes, and passe not theyr bounds, and dwell in temperate lande under a merrye parte of heaven, in mountains in the north side. And the fame is, that cranes pursue them, and pigmei armed, ride on goat bucks with arowes in springing time, and gather an hoast, and come to the sea and destroye their eggs and birds with all their might and strength, and doe such voyages in three moneths, and except they did so, cranes should increase, and be so many, that pigmei shuld not withstand them, and they make them houses to dwell in of feathers, and with the pens of cranes, and of shells of their egges, as he sayth, and saith also, that Aristotle meaneth, that Pigmei lyve in dennes. *All the later writers affirme this to be true, they are in the uttermost mountaines of Indie.*—*Bartholomæus de proprietatibus rerum*, fol. Lond. 1582, fol. 377.

Tarlton, in his *Newes out of Purgatory*, first printed in 1589, says of Robin Goodfellow, that he was “famosed in everie old wive’s chronicle, for his mad merrie pranks.” There is, indeed, sufficient evidence to show that there were fairy rhymes and fairy tales, of beings like those of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in circulation if not in print before that play was written.

We will here insert an anecdote from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, which was written in the same year to which we have assigned the composition of this play, and serves to show that common tradition at that period admitted the existence of fairy haunts, and illustrates the common opinion of the nature of those beings:—

“A farmer hired a grange commonly reported to be haunted with fairies, and paid a shrewd for it every half year. A gentleman asked him how he durst live in the house, and whether no spirits haunted him? Truth, quoth he, there be two saints in Heaven do vex me more than all the devills in hell,

namely, the Virgin Mary and Michael the Arch-angell, on whose daies he paid his rent.”—MS. Rawl. Poet. 66.

Mr. Collier has in his possession an unique black-letter ballad, entitled *The Merry Puck, or Robin Goodfellow*, which, from several passages, may be fairly concluded to have been before the public previously to the appearance of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Mr. Collier reprinted, for private circulation, twenty-five copies of this ballad, and has not only presented us with a copy, but, with his usual kindness and liberality, permitted it to be inserted in this volume. It most remarkably illustrates the Puck of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

*The Merry Puck, or Robin Good-fellow : Describing his birth and whose sonne he was, how he run away from his Mother, how he was merry at the Bridehouse, how his Father, King Oberon, found him, together with all his merry Prankes. Very pleasaunt and witty.*

## CHAPTER I.

Shewing his birth, and whose sonne he was.

HERE doe begin the merry iests  
of Robin Good-fellow :  
I'de wish you for to reade this booke,  
if you his Pranks would know.

But first I will declare his birth,  
and what his Mother was,  
And then how Robin merrily  
did bring his knacks to passe.

In time of old, when Fayries us'd  
to wander in the night,  
And through key-holes swiftly glide,  
now marke my story right.



Among these pretty fairy Elves  
was Oberon, their King,  
Who us'd to keepe them company  
still at their revelling.

And sundry houses they did use,  
but one, above the rest,  
Wherein a comely Lasse did dwell  
that pleas'd King Oberon best.

This lovely Damsell, neat and faire,  
so courteous, meek and mild,  
As sayes my booke, by Oberon  
she was begot with child.

She knew not who the father was ;  
but thus to all would say—  
In night time he to her still came,  
and went away ere day.

The midwife having better skill  
than had this new made mother,  
Quoth she, surely some fairy 'twas,  
for it can be no other.

And so the old wife rightly iudg'd,  
for it was so indeed.  
This Fairy shew'd himself most kind,  
and helpt his love at need ;

For store of linnen he provides,  
and brings her for her baby,  
With dainty cates and choised fare,  
he serv'd her like a lady.

The Christening time then being [come,  
most merry they [did pass ;  
The Gossips dra[ined a cheerful cup  
as then prov[ided was.

And Robin was [the infant call'd,  
so named the [Gossips by :  
What pranks [he played both day and night  
I'le tell you cer[tainly.

## CHAPTER II.

Shewing how Robin Good-fellow carried himselfe, and how  
he run away from his Mother.

WHILE yet he was a little lad  
and of a tender age,  
He us'd much waggish tricks to men,  
as they at him would rage.

Unto his Mother they complain'd,  
which grieved her to heare,  
And for these Pranks she threatned him  
he should have whipping cheare.

If that he did not leave his tricks,  
his jeering mocks and mowes :  
Quoth she, thou vile, untutor'd youth,  
these Pranks no breeding shewes ;

I cannot to the Market goe,  
but ere I backe returne,  
Thou scof'st my neighbours in such sort,  
which makes my heart to mourne.

But I will make you to repent  
these things, ere I have done :  
I will no favour have on thee,  
although thou beest my sonne.

Robin was griev'd to heare these words,  
which she to him did say,  
But to prevent his punishment,  
from her he run away.

And travelling long upon the way,  
his hunger being great,  
Unto a Taylor's house he came,  
and did intreat some meat :

The Taylor tooke compassion then  
upon this pretty youth,  
And tooke him for his Prentice straight,  
as I have heard in truth.

## CHAPTER III.

How Robin Good-fellow left his Master, and also how Oberon told him he should be turned into what shape he could wish or desire.

Now Robin Good-fellow, being plac't  
with a Taylor, as you heare,  
He grew a workman in short space,  
so well he ply'd his geare.

He had a gowne which must be made,  
even with all haste and speed ;  
The maid must have 't against next day  
to be her wedding weed.

The Taylor he did labour hard  
till twelve a clock at night ;  
Betweene him and his servant then  
they finished aright

The gowne, but putting on the sleeves :  
quoth he unto his man,  
I 'le goe to bed : whip on the sleeves  
as fast as ere you can.

So Robin straightway takes the gowne  
and hangs it on a pin,  
Then takes the sleeves and whips the gowne ;  
till day he nere did lin.

His Master rising in the morne,  
and seeing what he did,  
Begun to chide ; quoth Robin then,  
I doe as I was bid.

His Master then the gowne did take  
and to his worke did fall.  
By that time he had done the same  
the Maid for it did call.

Quoth he to Robin, goe thy wayes  
and fetch the remnants hither,  
That yesterday we left, said he,  
wee 'l breake our fasts together.

Then Robin hies him up the staires  
and brings the remnants downe,  
Which he did know his Master sav'd  
out of the woman's gowne.

The Taylor he was vext at this,  
he meant remnants of meat,  
That this good woman, ere she went,  
might there her breakfast eate.

Quoth she this is a breakfast good  
I tell you, friend, indeed ;  
And to requite your love I will  
send for some drinke with speed :

And Robin he must goe for it  
with all the speed he may :  
He takes the pot and money too,  
and runnes from thence away.

When he had wandred all the day  
a good way from the Towne,  
Unto a forest then he came :  
to sleepe he laid him downe.

Then Oberon came, with all his Elves,  
and danc'd about his sonne,  
With musick pleasing to the eare ;  
and, when that it was done,

King Oberon layes a scroule by him,  
that he might understand  
Whose sonne he was, and how hee'd grant  
whate'er he did demand :

To any forme that he did please  
himselſe he would translate ;  
And how one day hee'd send for him  
to see his fairy State.

Then Robin longs to know the truth  
of this mysterious skill,  
And turnes himselſe into what shape  
he thinks upon or will.

Sometimes a neighing horse was he,  
sometimes a gruntling hog,  
Sometimes a bird, sometimes a crow,  
sometimes a snarling dog.

## CHAPTER IV.

How Robin Good-fellow was merry at the Bridehouse.

Now Robin having got this art,  
he oft would make good sport,\*  
And hearing of a wedding day,  
he makes him ready for 't.

Most like a ioyiall Fidler then  
he drest himselfe most gay,  
And goes unto the wedding house,  
thereon his crowd to play.

He welcome was unto this feast,  
and merry they were all;  
He play'd and sung sweet songs all day,  
at night to sports did fall.

He first did put the candles out,  
and being in the dark,  
Some would he strike and some would pinch,  
and then sing like a lark.

The candles being light againe,  
and things well and quiet,  
A goodly posset was brought in  
to mend their former diet;

Then Robin for to have the same  
did turne him to a Beare;  
Straight at that sight the people all  
did run away for feare.

Then Robin did the posset eate,  
and having serv'd them so,  
Away goes Robin with all haste,  
then laughing hoe, hoe, hoe!

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\* Cf. M. N. D. Act iii. Sc. 2.

“ I with the morning's love have *oft made sport*.”



## CHAPTER V.

Declaring how Robin Good-fellow serv'd an old lecherous man.

THERE was an old man had a Neece,  
a very beauteous maid ;  
To wicked lust her Unkle sought  
this faire one to perswade.

But she a young man lov'd too deare  
to give consent thereto ;  
'Twas Robin's chance upon a time  
to heare their grievous woe :

Content yourselfe, then Robin saies,  
and I will ease your grieffe,  
I have found out an excellent way  
that will yeeld you reliefe.

He sends them to be married straight,  
and he, in her disguise,  
Hies home with all the speed he may  
to blind her Unkle's eyes :

And there he pyles his worke amaine,  
doing more in one houre,  
Such was his skill and workmanship,  
than she could doe in foure.

The old man wondred for to see  
the worke go on so fast,  
And there withall more worke doth he  
unto good Robin cast.

Then Robin said to his old man,  
good Unkle, if you please  
To grant to me but one ten pound  
I'le yeeld your love-suit ease.

Ten pounds, quoth he, I will give thee,  
sweet Neece, with all my heart,  
So thou will grant to me thy love,  
to ease my troubled heart.

Then let me a writing have, quoth he,  
from your owne hand with speed,  
That I may marry my sweet-heart  
when I have done this deed.

The old man he did give consent  
that he these things should have,  
Thinking that it had bin his Neece  
that did this bargaine crave ;

And unto Robin then quoth he,  
my gentle N[eece, behold,  
Goe thou into [thy chamber soone,  
and I'le goe [bring the gold.

When he into [the chamber came,  
thinking in[deed to play,  
Straight Robin [upon him doth fall,  
and carries h[im away

Into the chamb[er where the two  
faire Lovers [did abide,  
And gives to th[em their Unkle old,  
I, and the g[old beside.

The old man [vainly Robin sought,  
so man[y shapes he tries ;  
Someti[mes he was a hare or hound,  
som[etimes like bird he flies.

The [more he strove the less he sped,  
Th[is Lovers all did see ;  
And [thus did Robin favour them  
Full [kind and merrilie.

Thus Robin lived a merry life  
as any could enjoy,  
'Mong country farms he did resort,  
and oft would folks annoy :

But if the maids doe call to him,  
he still away will goe  
In knavish sort, and to himselfe  
he'd laugh out hoe, hoe, hoe !

He oft would beg and crave an almes,  
but take nought that they'd give ;  
In severall shapes he'd gull the world,  
thus madly did he live.

Sometimes a cripple he would seeme,  
 sometimes a souldier brave :  
 Sometimes a fox, sometimes a hare ;  
 brave pastimes would he have.

Sometimes an owle he'd seeme to be,  
 sometimes a skipping frog ;  
 Sometimes a kirne, in Irish shape,  
 to leape ore mire or bog :

Sometime he'd counterfeit a voyce,  
 and travellers call astray,  
 Sometimes a walking fire he'd be,  
 and lead them from their way.

Some call him Robin Good-fellow,  
 Hob goblin, or mad Crisp,  
 And some againe doe tearme him oft  
 by name of Will the Wispe :

But call him by what name you list,  
 I have studied on my pillow,  
 I think the best name he deserves  
 is Robin the Good Fellow.

At last upon a summer's night  
 King Oberon found him out,  
 And with his Elves in dancing wise  
 straight circled him about.

The Fairies danc't, and little Tom Thumb  
 on his bag-pipe did play,  
 And thus they danc't their fairy round  
 till almost break of day.

Then Phebus he most gloriously  
 begins to grace the aire,  
 When Oberon with his fairy traine  
 begins to make repaire,

With speed unto the Fairy land,  
 They swiftly tooke their way,\*

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\* Cf. M. N. D. Act iv. Sc. 1.

“ Then, my queen, in silence sad,  
 Trip we after the night's shade :  
 We the globe can compass soon,  
 Swifter than the wandering moon.”

And I out of my dreame awak't,  
and so 'twas perfect day.

Thus having told my dreame at full,  
I 'le bid you all farewell.  
If you applaud mad Robin's pranks,  
may be ere long I 'le tell

Some other stories to your eares,  
which shall contentment give :  
To gaine your favours I will seeke  
the longest day I live.

---

If our readers will permit us to call their attention to the following passage, spoken by Puck, after he had effected the transformation of Bottom, its similarity with part of the foregoing ballad will be at once perceived :—

“ I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,  
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier ;  
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometimes a hound,  
A hog, a headless bear, sometimes a fire ;  
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,  
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.”

So also in the ballad of Robin Goodfellow, printed by Percy, we have the following similar account of Robin's exploits :—

“ Sometimes I meete them like a man ;  
Sometimes an ox, sometimes an hound ;  
And to a horse I turn me can ;  
And trip and trot about them round ;  
But if to ride,  
My backe they stride,  
More swift than winde away I go,  
O'er hedge and lands,  
Thro' pools and ponds,  
A whirry, laughing, ho, ho, hoe !”

The name of Robin Goodfellow had, it appears, been familiar to the English as early as the thirteenth

century, being mentioned in a tale preserved in a manuscript of that date in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It does not, however, fall in with our plan to enter into any antiquarian discussion on the subject, but we take the opportunity of referring to this singular fact because it affords one proof, and that a remarkable one, of the antiquity of fairy mythology in this country of a similar nature to that used by Shakespeare.

In the library of Lord Francis Egerton is preserved a very curious tract, printed at London in 1628, containing a prose history of the *merry pranks* of the same mischievous spirit, intermixed with poetry. We have not been able to obtain a sight of this rarity, which is supposed to be unique, but Mr. Collier has given a description of it in his catalogue of the Bridgewater Library, and another account of it may be found in Beloe's *Anecdotes*. We suspect that some of the metrical portions of this book are of much earlier date, and it is possible that the following verses may be the originals of the exquisitely beautiful Anacreontic lines spoken by Puck at the end of the play. We cannot, however, discover the precise date of their composition :—

“ The moone shines faire and bright,  
And the owle hollows :  
Mortals now take their rests  
Upon their pillows :  
The bats abroad likewise,  
And the night raven,  
Which doth use for to call  
Men to death's haven.  
Now the mice peep abroad,  
And the cats take them :  
Now doe young wenches sleepe,  
Till their dreams wake them.”



The ideas are not only similar to those of Shakespeare, but follow in precisely the same order. But the beautiful lines to which we have referred cannot be too often repeated, and our conjecture will be strengthened by a close comparison :—

“ Now the hungry lion roars,  
And the wolf behowls the moon ;  
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,  
All with weary task fordone.  
Now the wasted brands do glow,  
Whilst the scritch-owl, scritch'ing loud,  
Puts the wretch, that lies in woe,  
In remembrance of a shroud.  
Now it is the time of night  
That the graves, all gaping wide,  
Every one lets forth his sprite,  
In the churchway paths to glide :  
And we fairies, that do run  
By the triple Hecate's team,  
From the presence of the sun,  
Following darkness like a dream,  
Now are frolic : not a mouse  
Shall disturb this hallow'd house :  
I am sent with broom before,  
To sweep the dust behind the door.”

Some similarity may also be traced between this and the following invocation of a spirit by a very celebrated magician. It is taken from *The famous history of Fryer Bacon*, edited by Mr. Thoms, p. 44 :—

“ Now the owle is flowne abroad,  
For I heare the croaking toade,  
And the bat that shuns the day,  
Through the darke doth make her way.  
Now the ghosts of men doe rise,  
And with fearful hideous cryes,  
Seek revengement from the good  
On their heads that spilt their blood.  
Come some spirit, quicke I say,

Night's the Devil's holyday :  
 Where'ere you be, in dennes, or lake,  
 In the ivy, ewe, or brake :  
 Quickly come and me attend,  
 That am Bacon's man and friend.  
 But I will have you take no shape  
 Of a bear, a horse, or ape :  
 Nor will I have you terrible,  
 And therefore come invisible."

Poole, in the second part of *The English Parnassus*,\* has collected together several poems on the fairies, including also extracts from the Midsummer Night's Dream. "Oberon's Feast," by Herrick, appears to have been one of the most popular of poems of this nature, and others by the same writer may be found in the *Hesperides*. We prefer selecting as a specimen one which is not so generally known: it was written by Sir Simon Steward, and published in the *Musarum Deliciæ, or the Muses Recreation*, 12mo. Lond. 1656:—

" When the monthly horned Queen  
 Grew jealous, that the stars had seen  
 Her rising from Endimions armes,  
 In rage, she throws her misty charmes  
 Into the bosome of the night,  
 To dim their curious prying light.  
 Then did the dwarfish faery elves  
 (Having first attir'd themselves)  
 Prepare to dresse their Oberon king

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\* This was a posthumous production. The author was educated at Clare Hall, Cambridge, and a portion of the original manuscript of the work we have quoted above is still preserved in the British Museum, MS. Hargrave, 205. It may be added, that Steward's poem has been printed by Dr. Bliss, from MS. Rawl. Poet. 147, in his *Bibliographical Miscellanies*, and other MS. copies of it are in MS. Malone, 17, MS. Ashm. 38, &c. Herrick's poems on fairies are also frequently found in contemporary manuscripts.

In highest robes for revelling.  
In a cobwed shirt, more thin  
Then ever spider since could spin,  
Bleach'd by the whitenesse of the snow,  
As the stormy windes did blow  
It in the vast and freezing aire ;  
No shirt halfe so fine, so faire.

A rich wastcoat they did bring,  
Made of the trout-flies gilded wing,  
At that his elveship 'gan to fret,  
Swearing it would make him sweat,  
Even with its weight, and needs would wear  
His wastcoat wove of downy haire,  
New shaven from an Eunuch's chin ;  
That pleas'd him well, 'twas wondrous thin.

The outside of his doublet was  
Made of the four-leav'd true-love grasse,  
On which was set so fine a glosse,  
By the oyle of crispy mosse ;  
That through a mist, and starry light,  
It made a rainbow every night.  
On every seam, there was a lace  
Drawn by the unctuous snailes slow trace ;  
To it, the purest silver thread  
Compar'd, did look like dull pale lead.

Each button was a sparkling eye  
Ta'ne from the speckled adders frye,  
Which in a gloomy night, and dark,  
Twinckled like a fiery spark :  
And, for coolnesse, next his skin,  
'Twas with white poppy lin'd within.

His breeches of that fleece were wrought,  
Which from Colchos Jason brought ;  
Spun into so fine a yarne,  
That mortals might it not discerne ;  
Wove by Arachne, in her loom,  
Just before she had her doom ;  
Dy'd crimson with a maiden's blush,  
And lyn'd with dandelyon push.

A rich mantle he did wear  
Made of tinsel gossamere,  
Be-starred over with a few  
Dyamond drops of morning dew.

His cap was all of ladies love,  
So passing light, that it did move,  
If any humming gnat or fly  
But buzz'd the ayre, in passing by ;

About it was a wreath of pearle,  
 Drop'd from the eyes of some poor girle  
 Pinch'd, because she had forgot  
 To leave faire water in the pot.  
 And for feather, he did weare  
 Old Nisus fatall purple haire.

The sword they girded on his thigh  
 Was smallest blade of finest rye.

A paire of buskins they did bring  
 Of the cow-ladyes corall wing;  
 Powder'd o're with spots of jet,  
 And lin'd with purple-violet.

His belt was made of mirtle leaves,  
 Plaited in small curious threaves,  
 Beset with amber cowslip studds,  
 And fring'd about with daizy budds;  
 In which his bugle horne was hung,  
 Made of the babbling eccho's tongue;  
 Which set unto his moon-burn'd lip,  
 He windes, and then his faeries skip:  
 At that, the lazy dawn 'gan sound,  
 And each did trip a faery round."

The manuscript, No. 36, 37, in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, contains a fairy song which does not appear to have been printed. We take the opportunity of inserting it here, the more especially as such pieces are not very often met with:—

" I spied Kinge Oberon and his beuteous Queene,  
 Attended by a nimble footed trayne  
 Of fayeryes trippinge ore the medows greene,  
 And to meewards (methought) they came amayne.  
 I coucht myselfe behinde a bushe to spye,  
 What would betide the noble company.

" It gann to rayne, the Kinge and Queene they runne  
 Under a mushroom fretted over head,  
 With glowwormes artificially donne,  
 Resemblinge much the canopy of a bedd.  
 Of cloth, of silver, and such glimmeringe light  
 It gave, as stars doe in a frosty night.

" The Kinge perceivinge it grew night apace,  
 And that faint light was but for show alone,



Out of a box made of a fayre topace,  
Hee toke a blasinge carbuncle that showne  
Like to a flameinge barre of iron, and  
Stucke it among the glowormes with his hand.

“ Like as the sunne darts forth his ruddy beames,  
Unable longer to hold up his head,  
Glaunceinge his gloateinge eye upon the streames,  
Such was the lustre that this mixture bredd,  
So light it was that one might plainly see,  
What was donne under that rich canopy.

“ The floore whereon they trode, it was of jett  
And mother of pearle, pollished and cutt,  
Chequerd, and in most decent order sett,  
A table dyamond was theire table, butt  
To see th' reflection from the roofe to the table,  
'Twas choyce meethought and shewed admirable.

“ Like to a heaven directly was that table,  
And these bright wormes they doe resemble starres,  
That precious carbunckle soe invaluable,  
Lookt like a meteor with his ominous barres  
Hung out in heaven by th' allseeinge eye,  
Bidd us expect to heare a tragedye.

“ Soe this great light appeared amongst the rest.  
But now it grew towards suppertyme apace,  
And for to furnish out this suddaine feast,  
The servitours, who knew each one his place,  
Disperse themselves immediately, and  
Some find the choycest dayntyes on the land.

“ Others dive downe to th' bottome of the deepe ;  
Another mounts up to the lofty skye,  
To fetch downe hony dew of mowntaynes steepe—  
In every corner doe they serch and pry,  
Who can the best accepted present bringe,  
To please theire soe much honoured Queene and Kinge.

“ One gathers grapes ripe from the lusty vine,  
And with his little hands hee squeazeth out  
The juce, and then presents it up for wine ;  
And straight theire presses in among the rowt  
Another loaden with an eare of wheate,  
The whitest and the fairest hee cann gett.”



We have been favoured by a friend with the following copy of the title-page of a little volume, which would doubtlessly afford some illustration of this subject,\* but we have not been able to see a copy;—"A description of the King and Queene of Fayries, their habit, fare, abode, pompe, and state, being very delightful to the sense, and full of mirth. London, printed for Richard Harper, and are to be sold at his shop at the Hospital Gate, 1635."

Mr. Thorpe, of Piccadilly, possesses an old printed ballad, entitled *The King and Queen of Fairie*, in Latin and English, commencing thus—

" Upon a time the fairy elves,  
Having first arrayed themselves,  
Thought it meet to cloath their King,  
In robes most fit for revelling."

If we have said too much on the subject of these aerial beings, we trust that the pardon of our readers will be extended to us; for although the minutiae of the inhabitants of the mushroom world may be too trivial to interest some, yet it ought to be remembered that

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\* Perhaps one of the most popular fairy songs is that printed by Percy and others, commencing—

" Come, follow, follow me," &c.

This was sung to the tune of *The Spanish Gypsie*, which began very similarly:—

" O follow, follow me,  
For we be gipsies three."

The tune is, we are told, to be found in the *English Dancing Master*, 1651. See Thorpe's Catalogue of Manuscripts for 1831, p. 114.

“ Another sort there be, that will  
Be talking of the fairies still,  
Nor never can they have their fill,  
    As they were wedded to them :  
No tales of them their thirst can slake,  
So much delight therein they take,  
And some strange thing they fain would make  
    Knew they the way to do them.”

So much for the Fairies.

## CHAPTER V.

“ Is there no play,  
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour ? ”

WE agree with Mr. Heraud in his opinion, that the alleged unfitness of the Midsummer Night's Dream for representation on the stage is founded on incorrect data. In fact, the success that has attended its recent production at Covent Garden Theatre entirely controverts Mr. Knight's assertion, that “ this play, with all its harmony of dramatic arrangement, is not for the stage—at least, for the modern stage.”

It must, however, be admitted, that for a length of time the revivals of this drama have not been by any means eminently successful; but to attribute this to the play itself being too ethereally poetic for the stage, is, we conceive, adopting too hasty a conclusion. “ There is no drama,” observes Mr. Heraud, “ but what is so strictly considered ; ” and does not the poet himself say—“ The best in this kind are but shadows ; and the worst are no worse if

our imagination amend them.” It is most probable, that the extreme difficulty of personating the characters of Oberon and the four lovers with advantage, and of procuring, at the same time, actors fitted by their peculiar talents for those parts, are the principal causes of failure. Even in the present unrivalled cast of the play as performed at Covent Garden Theatre, where Oberon is very charmingly represented by Mrs. Charles Mathews, one of the most distinguished actresses of our time; yet it is no disparagement to say of the four who personate the lovers, and who are all in excellent repute, that only one is really fitted for the complete realization of Shakespeare’s ideas.\*

We have few early notices of the representation of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Mr. Collier, in his elaborate work on the stage, has given us, from a manuscript at Lambeth Palace, a very singular account of a play represented at the Bishop of Lincoln’s house on the night of Sunday, September 27th, 1631. The piece chosen for this occasion was the *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and it was got up as a private amusement. Laud, however, exerted his influence to punish this breach of the due observ-

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\* We will here give the cast of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as revived at Covent Garden Theatre on the 16th November, 1840, which has already had a run of nearly sixty nights, nor do the public yet appear to be tired of it. Theseus=Cooper; Egeus=Diddear; Lysander=Vining; Demetrius=Brindal; Philostrate=Hemming; Quince=Bartley; Bottom=Harley; Flute=Keeley; Snout=Meadows; Snug=F. Matthews; Starveling=Payne; Hippolyta=Mrs. Brougham; Hermia=Mrs. Nisbett; Helena=Miss Cooper; Oberon=Madame Vestris; Titania=Mrs. Walter Lacy; Puck=Miss Marshall; First Fairy=Miss Rainforth; Second Fairy=Miss Grant.

ance of the Sabbath; and the following extraordinary order is extracted from a decree made by a self-constituted court among the Puritans, for the censure and punishment of offences of this nature :—

“ Likewise wee doe order, that Mr. Wilson, because hee was a speciall plotter and contriver of this business, and did in such a brutishe manner acte the same with an asses head, and therefore hee shall, upon Tuisday next, from six of the clocke in the morning till six of the clocke at night, sitt in the Porter's Lodge at my Lords Bishoppes House, with his feete in the stocks, and attyred with his asse head, and a bottle of hay sett before him, and this subscription on his breast :—

“ Good people I have played the beast,  
And brought ill things to passe :  
I was a man, but thus have made  
Myselfe a silly asse.”

Bottom appears to have been then considered the most prominent character in the play; and “ the merry conceited humors of Bottom the Weaver” were extracted from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and made into a farce or droll,\* which was very frequently played “ on the sly,” after the suppression of the theatres. “ When the publique theatres were shut up,” observes Kirkman, “ and the actors forbidden to present us with any of their tragedies, because we had enough of that in earnest; and comedies, because the vices of the age were too lively and smartly represented; then all that we could divert

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\* “ The merry conceited humors of Bottom the Weaver, as it hath been often publikely acted by some of his Majesties comedians, and lately privately presented by several apprentices for their harmless recreation, with great applause,” 4to. Lond. 1661.



ourselves with were these humours and pieces of plays, which passing under the name of a merry conceited fellow called Bottom the Weaver, Simpleton the Smith, John Swabber, or some such title, were only allowed us, and that but by stealth too, and under pretence of rope dancing and the like.”\*

The information which Pepys has given us relative to the representation of this play, on September 29th, 1662, is anything but satisfactory, and does not reflect much credit on the acting drama of the time. Here is his extraordinary opinion:†—“To the King’s Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.” It was, perhaps, “too ethereally poetic” for the gross mind of the eccentric secretary.

In the year 1692 the *Midsummer Night’s Dream* was changed into an opera under the title of *The Fairy Queen*, and performed at Dorset Garden. This alteration was printed at London the same year, and was produced on a very splendid scale. “In ornament,” says Downes, “it was superior, especially in cloaths, for all the singers and dancers, scenes, machines and decorations, all most profusely set off and excellently performed, chiefly the instrumental and vocal part composed by Mr. Purcel, and

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\* *The Wits*, 4to. Lond. 1673. A copy of this book is in the King’s Library in the British Museum, and is an abridgement of Kirkman’s *Wits, or Sport upon Sport*, 8vo. Lond. 1673. Both these contain *The humors of Bottom the Weaver*. It is said that Robert Cox, the player, was the person who adapted most of the pieces contained in *The Wits*.

† Diary, edited by Lord Braybrooke.

dances by Mr. Priest. The court and town were wonderfully satisfied with it; but the expenses in setting it being so great, the company got very little by it."

Richard Leveridge, in 1716, adapted from this play *A Comick Masque of Pyramus and Thisbe*, which was produced at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was printed at London the same year.

In 1755, Garrick produced, at Drury Lane, an opera taken from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, under the title of *The Fairies*. The parts of the clowns were entirely omitted. The following prologue, spoken by Garrick, may be interesting to those who take delight in the history of our own operatic performances:—

"A moment stop your tuneful fingers, pray,  
While here, as usual, I my duty pay.  
Don't frown, my friends, (*to the band*) you soon shall  
melt again;

But, if not there is felt each dying strain,  
Poor I shall speak and you will scrape in vain.  
To see me now you think the strangest thing!  
For, like friend Benedick, I cannot sing:  
Yet in this prologue, cry but you, Coraggio!  
I'll speak you both a jig, and an Adagio.

A Persian king, as Persian Tales relate,  
Oft went disguised to hear the people prate;  
So curious I sometimes steal forth, incog,  
To hear what critics croak of me—King Log.  
Three nights ago I heard a tête-a-tête  
Which fix'd, at once, our English opera's fate:  
One was a youth born here, but flush from Rome,  
The other born abroad, but here his home;  
And first the English foreigner began,  
Who thus address'd the foreign Englishman:  
An English opera! 'tis not to be borne;  
I both my country and their music scorn,  
Oh, damn their Ally Croakers and their Early Horn.  
*Signor si—bat sons—wors recitativo:*  
*Il tutto, è bestiale e cativo,*

'This said, I made my exit, full of terrors !  
 And now ask mercy for the following errors :  
 Excuse us first, for foolishly supposing  
 Your countryman could please you in composing ;  
 An op'ra too ! play'd by an English band,  
 Wrote in a language which you understand ;  
 I dare not say who wrote it ; I could tell ye,  
 To soften matters, Signor Shakespearelli :  
 This awkward drama (I confess th' offence)  
 Is guilty too of poetry and sense :  
 And then the price we take—you'll all abuse it,  
 So low, so unlike op'ras—but excuse it,  
 We'll mend that fault whenever you shall choose it.  
 Our last mischance, and worse than all the rest,  
 Which turns the whole performance to a jest,  
 Our singers all are well, and all will do their best.  
 But why would this rash fool, this Englishman,  
 Attempt an op'ra ?—'tis the strangest plan !

Struck with the wonders of his master's art,  
 Whose sacred dramas shake and melt the heart,  
 Whose heaven-born strains the coldest breast inspire,  
 Whose chorus-thunder sets the soul on fire !  
 Inflamed, astonish'd ! at those magic airs,  
 When Samson groans, and frantic Saul despairs.  
 The pupil wrote—his work is now before ye,  
 And waits your stamp of infamy or glory !  
 Yet, ere his errors and his faults are known,  
 He says, those faults, those errors, are his own ;  
 If through the clouds appear some glimm'ring rays,  
 They're sparks he caught from his great Master's blaze !"

The music in this opera was composed by Smith,  
 and contemporary journals speak of it in the highest  
 terms.

Garrick again produced the *Midsummer Night's  
 Dream* at Drury Lane on Wednesday, November  
 23rd, 1763. The interlude was restored ; but it was  
 very coldly received by a limited audience, and only  
 acted once. The *St. James's Chronicle*, in a critique  
 on this revival, describes it as " an odd romantic  
 performance, more like a masque than a play, and  
 presenting a lively picture of the ungoverned imagi-  
 nation of that great poet." It was then cut down to



an afterpiece by Colman, under the title of *A Fairy Tale*, the supernatural characters being alone retained, and produced in that form on November 26th, when it met with rather better success.

Colman's alteration was again produced at the Haymarket Theatre on July 18th, 1777, with some songs added from Garrick's version. The *Fairy Prince*, also, acted at Covent Garden Theatre in 1771, contains a few lines taken from this play.

In 1816 another alteration of this play, in three acts, by Reynolds, was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 17th of January. In this revival, the part of Bottom was undertaken by Liston, Quince by Emery, Hermia by Miss Stephens, and Helena by Miss Foote. The music was by Bishop, and the journals agree that the piece was "got up" in a most magnificent style. It was played about twenty nights, but cannot be said to have been very successful.

But all these representations of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* must give place to its recent revival at Covent Garden Theatre. Every thing that fine taste, a most liberal management, and an excellent cast could accomplish, have been called into action; and its success must have equalled the most sanguine expectations of the projectors. The alterations from the original version of the play are few, and made with that good judgment which characterizes every thing that Mr. Planché undertakes. We would, however, suggest that the omission which is made of a portion of Hermia's speech, when she loses Lysander, destroys the climax, and causes the whole to fall languidly on the ear; it is better as it is in the original:—

“ Lysander ! what, remov'd ? Lysander, lord !  
 What, out of hearing, gone ? No sound, no word !  
 Alack, where are you ? speak, and if you hear ;  
 Speak, of all loves ; I swoon almost with fear.  
 No ? then I well perceive you are not nigh :  
 Either death or you I'll find immediately.”

We would also ask how Theseus, unassisted by the Prologue's description of the dumb show, which Mr. Planché has omitted, can recognize the representation of moonshine ? We are afraid that few of us possess so penetrating a vision ; but perhaps the heroes of old excelled the moderns in this as in other attributes.

## CHAPTER VI.

“ Who first found out the man i' th' moon,  
 That to the ancients was unknown ?”

**A**LTHOUGH the legend of the Man in the Moon is perhaps one of the most singular and popular superstitions known, yet we have been unable to discover early materials for a connected account of its progress, nor have the researches of former writers been extended to this curious subject.

It is very probable that the natural appearance of the moon, and those delineations on its disc which modern philosophers have considered to belong to the geographical divisions of that body, may originally have suggested the similarity vulgarly supposed to exist between these outlines and a man “ pycchynde stake.” In fact, it is hardly possible to account for the universality of the legend by any other conjecture ; and it may perhaps be considered



a general rule, when a fable of this nature is found to be popular both at the same time and under similar forms, in countries widely separated from each other, that some natural phenomenon common to all places was the true origin of the myth. With regard to the legend now under consideration, we can do little more than furnish our readers with proofs of its existence at various periods, and beg them to form their own conclusions.

In a manuscript of the beginning of the fourteenth century, in the British Museum (MS. Harl. 2253) is preserved a very curious English poem on the Man in the Moon, probably of the thirteenth century. It has been printed by Ritson, but no apology is requisite for repeating so singular a document:—

“ Mon in the mone stond and strit,  
On his bot forke is burthen he bereth,  
Hit is mucche wonder that he na down slyt,  
For doute leste he valle he shoddreth ant shereth.  
When the forst freseth mucche chele he byd,  
The thornes beth kene is hattren to-tereth;  
Nis no wyght in the world that wot wen he syt,  
Ne, bote hit bue the hegge, whet wedes he wereth.

“ Whider trowe this mon ha the wey take,  
He hath set is o fot is other to-foren,  
For non hithte that he hath ne syght me hym ner shake,  
He is the sloweste mon that ever wes y-boren.  
Wher he were o the feld pycchynde stake,  
For hope of ys thornes to dutten is doren,  
He mot myd is twybyl other trous make,  
Other al is dayes werk ther were y-loren.

“ This ilke mon upon heh when er he were,  
Wher he were y the mone boren ant y-fed,  
He leneth on is forke ase a grey frere,  
This crokede caynard sore he is adred.  
Hit is mony day go that he was here,  
Ichot of is ernde he nath nout y-sped,  
He hath hewe sumwher a burthen of brere,  
Tharefore sum hayward hath taken ys wed.

“ ȝef thy wed ys y-take bring hom the trous,  
 Sete forth thyn other fot, stryd over sty,  
 We shule preye the haywart hom to ur hous,  
 Ant maken hym at heyse for the maystry;  
 Drynke to hym deorly of fol god bous,  
 Ant oure dame douse shal sitten hym by,  
 When that he is dronke ase a dreynt mous,  
 Thenne we shule borewe the wed ate bayly.

“ This mon hereth me nout, thah ich to hym crye,  
 Ichot the cherl is def, the del hym to-drawe,  
 Thah ich ȝeȝe upon heth nulle nout hye,  
 The lostlase ladde con nout o lawe.  
 Hupe forth, Hubert, hosede pye,  
 Ichot thart a-marstled into the mawe;  
 Thah me teone with hym that myn teh mye,  
 The cherld nul nout adoun er the day dawe.”

Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie*, p. 412,) informs us that there are three legends connected with the Man in the Moon; the first, that this personage was Isaac carrying a bundle of sticks for his own sacrifice; the second, that he was Cain; and the other, which is taken from the history of the sabbath-breaker, as related in the Book of Numbers. In the poem, entitled *The Testament of Creseide*, printed in Chaucer's works, there is an allusion to the same legend:—

“ Next after him come lady Cynthia,  
 The laste of al, and swiftest in her sphere,  
 Of colour blake, buskid with hornis twa,  
 And in the night she listith best t' apere,  
 Hawe as the leed, of colour nothing clere,  
 For al the light she borrowed at her brother  
 Titan, for of herselfe she hath non other.

“ Her gite was gray and ful of spottis blake,  
 And on her brest a chorle painted ful even,  
 Bering a bushe of thornis on his bake,  
 Whiche for his theft might clime no ner the heven.”

We have been favoured by a friend with the following copy of the first stanza of a traditional Somersetshire song, which curiously illustrates the

popularity of the Man in the Moon, but unfortunately he cannot recollect any more of it:—

“The man in the moon drinks claret,  
But he is a dull Jack-a-Dandy,  
Would he know a sheep's head from a carrot,  
He should learn to drink cyder and brandy.”

Another old ballad commences in the same manner:

“The man in the moon drinks claret,  
With powder-beef, turnip, and carrot.”

And Ashmole (MS. Ashm. 36, 37,) has even had the audacity to make a pun upon this mighty individual:—

“Tis strange! yet true: He's but a month-old man,  
And yet hath liv'd ere since the world began.”

From this it would appear that the legend itself had been lost sight of before Ashmole's time.

Gryph, in his *Absurda Comica*, entitled *Herr Peter Squentz*,\* has copied Shakespeare's idea of introducing a person to represent Moonshine. Other characters in the same play are also taken from Shakespeare. Bully Bottom is transformed to “Meister Bulla Butäin,” and he plays “die wand.” Peter Squentz, or Peter Quince, refers at once to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:—

“*Kr.* Was wollen wir aber vor eine tröstliche *Comædi* tragiren?  
*Sq.* Von Pirus und Thisbe.

*Kl.* Das ist übermassen trefflich, man kan allerhand schöne Lehre Trost und Vermahnung draus nehmen, aber das ärgeste ist, ich weisz die Historie noch nicht, geliebt es nicht E. Herrlichkeit dieselbte zu erzehlen.

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\* Teutsche Gedichte, 8vo. Bres. und Leip. 1698, p. 718-752.

*Sq.* Gar gerne. Der heil. alte Kirchen-Lehrer *Ovidius* schreibt in seinem schönen Buch *Memorium phosis*, das Piramus die Thisbe zu einem Brunnen bestellet habe, inmittelst sey ein abscheulicher häszlicher Löwe Kommen, vor welchem sie aus Furcht entlauffen, und ihren Mantel hinterlassen, darauf der Löwe Jungen ausgehecket; als er aber weggegangen, findet Piramus die blutige Schaubе, und meinet der Löwe habe Thisben gefressen, darum ersticht er sich aus Verzweiffelung, Thisbe Kommet wieder und findet Piramum todt, derowegen ersticht sie sich ihm zu Trotz.

*Pick.* Und stirbet?

*Sq.* Und stirbet.

*Pick.* Das ist tröstlich, es wird ubermassen schön zu sehen seyn: aber saget Herr Peter Squentz? Hat der Löwe auch viel zu reden?

*Sq.* Nein, der Löwe musz nur brüllen.

*Pick.* Ey so wil ich der Löwe seyn, denn ich lerne nicht gerne viel auswendig.

*Sq.* Ey nein! Monsieur Pickelhäring musz ein Hauptperson agiren.

*Pick.* Habe ich denn Kopffs genug zu einer Hauptperson.

*Sq.* Ja freylich. Weil aber vornehmlich ein tapfferer ernsthafter nud ansehnlicher Mann erfordert wird zum *Prologo* und *Epilogo*, so will ich dieselbe auff mich nehmen, und der Vorreder und Nachreder des Spieles, das ist, Anfang und das Ende seyn."

It will be remembered that Quince remarks that Pyramus and Thisbe, "as the story goes, did meet by moonlight." Gryph puts the same into the mouth of Herr Peter Squentz, with another allusion to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or, as Squenk miscalls it, *Memorium phosis*. A calendar is then referred to, and the same ingenious methods of solving the difficulty proposed, as in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In fact Gryph's *Herr Peter Squentz* is a paraphrastical translation of the comic portions of Shakespeare's drama. But to return to our subject.

Throughout Germany the legend agrees with that given above, and our version of it was probably derived from that quarter. Hebel gives us, in his *Alemannic Poems*, a metrical account of the "Mann



in Mond," in form of dialogue between a mother and her child.

The Italians of the thirteenth century imagined the Man in Moon to be Cain, who is going to sacrifice to the Lord, thorns—the most wretched production of the ground. Dante refers to this in the twentieth canto of the *Inferno* :—

“chè già tiene 'l confine  
D'amenduo gli emisperi, e tocca l'onda  
Sotto Sibilia, Caino e le spine.”

One of our English nursery rhymes is pertinent to this subject, and is, we believe, the only authority to be found for an actual journey having been undertaken by this eccentric and solitary inhabitant of a lunatic asylum, to visit the beings of this sublunary world :—

“The man in the moon  
Came tumbling down,  
And asked his way to Norwich.  
He went by the south,  
And burnt his mouth,  
With supping hot pease porridge.”

From Manningham's *Diary*\* we learn that among the “devises” at Whitehall, in 1601, was “the man in the <sup>l</sup>moone with thornes on his backe, looking downeward.” Middleton also refers to this mythological personage,—“as soon as he comes down, and the bush left at his back, Ralph is the dog behind him.” Shakespeare mentions the dog; and in the interlude, the person who represents Moonshine is actually accompanied by a bush of thornes, a lantern, and a dog. It is possible that the hare, which animal is in the east considered to be the emblem of the

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\* MS. Harl. 5353. See Hunter on the *Tempest*, p. 69.



moon's divinity, may have been in the middle ages intermingled with the European legend. The *Heetopades*\* contains the following allusion to this belief:—"Then I will declare what are the commands of the God Chandra. He bade me say, that in driving away and destroying the hares who are appointed to guard the fountain which is consecrated to that deity, you have done ill; for, said he, they are my guards, and it is notorious that a figure of a hare is my emblem."

Daniel O'Rourke, a famous Irish tippler, chronicled in Croker's Fairy Legends, is said to have had a brief but very unsatisfactory interview with this same inhabitant of the moon. "Out there walks—who do you think but the man in the moon himself? I knew him by his bush." It is to be regretted that Daniel has not furnished us with a more accurate account of his habiliments.

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\* Wilkins, in his translation of this book, interprets the animal mentioned to be a rabbit. We think that the original word more properly signifies *a hare*.

## CHAPTER VII.

“ Give it an understanding.”

IN the 5th Act, Philostrate produces a list of the various amusements which had been proffered by the people of Athens, for Theseus to wear away the “long age of three hours, between his after-supper and bed-time.” The exact meaning of one of these has never been satisfactorily explained :—

“ The thrice three Muses mourning for the death  
Of learning, late deceased in beggary.”

Theseus rejects this, and adds—

“ That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with the nuptial ceremony.”

Now, it will be remembered that out of the four “sports which are rife,” three of them certainly refer to a period and action consistent with the nature of the plot. We have

“ The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung,  
By an Athenian eunuch, to the harp.”

Next in order,

“ The riot of the tipsy bacchanals,  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.”

And lastly,

“ A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus,  
And his love Thisbe : very tragical mirth.”

It is probable that the two lines we have given above were either inserted after the play itself was written, or that the poet merely makes a general allusion to the low state of literature at the time; and this supposition accords sufficiently with Shakespeare's usual practice. For instance, as we have before mentioned, he evidently alludes, nearly at the beginning of the play, to the state of the weather in the year 1594; but this description is not at all incompatible with the circumstances of his drama. Now we think that a particular allusion to some real person and some real death has this difficulty. Theseus rejects one "sport,"

" In glory of my kinsman Hercules."

and another, because it was

" an old device; and it was play'd  
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror."

Is it reasonable to suppose that at the same time Shakespeare wrote the above lines, he would have considered it at all consistent to introduce a personal allusion to any of his own contemporaries? For, it must be remembered, such an allusion evidently could not apply also to the period of Theseus. If any allusion be intended, we think it must be general; and Daniel, in the *Cleopatra*, printed in 1594, complains sadly of the "barbarism" of the time. Perhaps, however, the plague of 1593 may have simultaneously destroyed learning and some of its professors.

Some have considered the lines in question to relate to the death of Spenser. If so, they must have been inserted immediately before the first publication

of the play, in 1600, for Spenser died sometime in the year 1599. Although we do not think that this conjecture is supported by much probability, yet we are glad of the opportunity to insert another extract from Lane's *Triton's Trumpet*, because it not only contains an interesting allusion to Spenser's death, but also mentions other English poets:—

“ Madam, quoth hee, I chaunced this Aprill springe  
 Survaience manie coasts on wanderinge winge,  
 To see a sight, did please mee to the hart,  
 In which I deeme yourselfe ought beare a part :  
 The sight was somptuous, buildings, ample hie,  
 Vauncinge magnificence, and maiestie,  
 Trophies also, which hope fullie maie breede,  
 As well good mindes, as greate mindes of suche seede ;  
 Intendinge bewteous schooles for sacred learninge,  
 To everie one ingenious of dicerninge :  
 Onlie there wants to fullfill speculation,  
 Vnto the muses duteous conservation,  
 Woold but your Ladieshipp in lovinge gree !  
 Leave this hott zone, and com along with mee !

Whither quoth shee ? to England Danus said.  
 To England ! quoth shee, no : that place me traidd,  
 Sithe none theare loves mee ; which I knowe by prooffe,  
 Yon they from my deere Spencer stood alooff,  
 When verbale drones of virtuous merit scant  
 Suffred that gentile poet die of want :  
 One onlie knowinge generositie,  
 And findinge he woold crave for modestie,  
 Him sent in greatest sicknes, crownes good store,  
 So Robert Essex did (honors decore)  
 Nathles of pininge griefe, and wantes decaie,  
 Hee much thoncke that slowt Earle, that thus gann saie,  
 The medcine comes too late to the pacient,  
 Tho died. And so shoold I, yf thither went !

Alas ! was that his ende ? quoth Danus tho,  
 I pittie him, yet theareof this I kno,  
 Hee had on him bestowd a funeral,  
 After the rites of Laureat coronal.

At that Vipoda laughd, naie swore these strive  
 To dandle poets dead, yet leave alive.  
 Ne had that cost vppon him binn imploid,  
 But for my lovinge frend Lodovick Lloyd.



Yet lett that passe ! sithe I do love force none,  
 Ne crave of right annothers, but mine own :  
 Ha, yet they saie, that folke binn chaunged quite  
 Fro mental thewes to Mammons appetite.  
 Avaunt ! for wheare I see one that waie bend,  
 Of him I never meane to make my frend.

O but, quoth Danus, Madam, yet are theare  
 Some able, active, valient, stowt, austear :  
 Besides, amongst them, theare bee some good witts,  
 So farr as drincking, wenchinge, eake permitts !  
 Yet graunt I touchinge them, that they of late,  
 Have lost their Father's footestepps in their gate.  
 Natheless I hope well of their generous,  
 They wil bee to us like th' old grations,  
 And by November's mirror elevate,  
 Correct own faultes, which they in others hate.

On that condicion, quoth shee, I will wend,  
 To chalke how they which after come may mend.

Full glad was Danus when hee heard her yeild,  
 Tho proffred him hert, beare ore sea, and feild.  
 Just as herselfe, her owne course vp shoold steare,  
 And safelie woold her ferrie anie wheare :  
 Nowe, as shee shoold be pleasd to name the place,  
 His winges shoold fetch yt vp in litle space.

Tho uppon Danus back Vipoio sits,  
 Bowt whome with golden girdle a knott he knitts,  
 And shee fast holding his forelock up they flewe,  
 So for a while, bidds Amara adiewe.  
 But Danus, quoth shee, rowz up all your might !  
 For wee from hence, must take a weerie flight.  
 Now when the wind had opened Danus winges,  
 And all his plumage spred, aloft hee flinges,  
 Wheare fruishinge foorth his aierie pineond quills,  
 Delightfullie, through Auraes bosom thrills.  
 But in the midle region soringe, viewd,  
 What of each innovation greene ensewd.  
 The peacefull plaines shee sawe with sweete delight,  
 The troublous seas eake under came her sight,  
 Th' ambitious projects mountinge up to skye,  
 The stench of everie pollute misterie,  
 All which shee lawghd, in that herselfe was heere,  
 And bought not of their wares at handes so deere.  
 Danus, quoth shee, the queene of love they saie,  
 Borne on a wave, at Venice first did swaie,  
 Thence must I fetch a retort glasse full bright,  
 Th' engredientes ceremonial to indight.  
 Tho soone they crossd the Medeterranean,

Next th' Adriatick : then the Gulf did span,  
 Wheare Danus, like a sodaine stooping kite,  
 Up snaught a Venice glasse in surging flight.  
 Thence, steerd to Rochel for some savorie salt,  
 Thence crossd to Greece, which did fore criples halt,  
 Hence to the promontorie Helicon,  
 From whose greene ribbes cleere Hippocrane rann :  
 The silver veines whereaof in glasse shee putt,  
 The which for England, prisoned close gann shutt,  
 Thence to England wheare snaught water of the rose,  
 Muske, civet, amber, also did inclose ;  
 That donn, shee Danus higher bidds convaie her,  
 Into the fierie region, bove all aier,  
 Wheare flame invisible aie dwells simplie pure,  
 Discreete, swifte, meeke, of incorrupted powr :  
 With purest flame, Vipoiaes lillie hand,  
 Thrice three times fill'd, enshrind in cristal band,  
 For hott Balneo Mariæ made to ascent,  
 In which old Helicon's new font shee pent.

Now when Vipoiaes cominge well was known,  
 And ore all Englandes easterne sea coast flown,  
 The Ladie Cantabrigia speedelie,  
 And all her learn'd with greate solemnitie,  
 Went gravelie dight to entertaine the Dame,  
 They muchlie lov'd, and honor'd in her name :  
 To grace whome, Titan flunge his night-gown off,  
 Havinge his candel burnt untill a snoff,  
 Now donn'd more glorious robes of maiestie,  
 And thenn ore spredd with golden canopie.

Vipio cladd in white, as winter's sno,  
 Sweete as sweete blossoms on mayes flourish groe,  
 Was of Dame Cantabrigia deerelie mett,  
 And greater honor'd, as b' her best witts fett,  
 Whose Laureate poesies fro' Apollo brought,  
 And in Minervaes finest samplers wrought,  
 Orestrewd the grownd, yea hunge each peopled streete :  
 But that each stranger mote both heere ! and seete !  
 The milke white swannes then strain'd in stile sublime,  
 Of ornate verse, rich prose, and nervous rime.  
 In short, to tellen all, doth not behove,  
 Wheare wellcome, sat weare powr'd in cuppe of love.

Tho after complements wear overpast,  
 And everie colleage visited in haste,  
 Vipio by that licence (call'd her own)  
 Of ancient privilege, as well is known,  
 And in the schooles archivis faire enrolld,  
 Which hitherto by no man was controlld,

Thus boldlie to Dame Cantabrigia sedd,  
 Her pupills her shooed waite alive and dead  
 In those schooles bredd : so sommond them to her !  
 To doe theire duties to theire visiter.

Don Lidgate ! noble Sidney ! Spencer diepe !  
 By her up call'd arose fro deadlie sleepe.  
 And Hugo Holland, whoe my lines did chide,  
 For hee ann ill-made verse could near abide.  
 Whoe comd, shee to Dame Cantabrigia thus,  
 Sister ! my sonnes and yee, shall wend with us,  
 Our sister deere Oxonia to behold,  
 Once in our lives before wee waxen old.

Content with all myne hart, Cambrigia said,  
 And so what likd is, neare is longe delayd.

Danus the pursevaunt first beare the newes,  
 Which made th' Oxoniens whett theire golden muse,  
 And quicklie done theire learn'd formalities :  
 The bringing reverence in theire steddfast eies,  
 Mustred poesies feilds of endlesse store,  
 Which soone declard theire treasures never poore.  
 Tho backe againe swift Danus to them flewe,  
 To ussher to the schooles this learned crewe.  
 But Oxon sheene with all her scholy gent,  
 Beyond th' east gate in goodlie order went.  
 Wheare when they sawe Vipoio bewteous,  
 They lowlie lowted her obsequious,  
 And sweetlie gann embrace (as well became  
 Theire quicke conceipts) before so rare a dame,  
 Whoe them accepts of ladie-like deport,  
 They takinge her swete favr in kindest sort.  
 The first thinge that shee did which long was wisht,  
 Shee caus'd that both those learned sisters kisse :  
 Whome linckinge arme in arme, and hand in hand,  
 Shee peremptorelie gave this command,  
 That neither of presum'd antiquitie,  
 Should hencefoorth challenge for prioritie !  
 But thus demonstrates in a three fold walke,  
 As they three in one front the walkes end stalke,  
 Shee, whoe the right hand had (as uppermost)  
 At theire next turne shoold chaunge for th' neathermoste.  
 But at next turne, each changd to eithers place,  
 Much like to th'ay dawnce, by which interlace,  
 Wittelie spedd, theire mutuall consent,  
 Inferior yielded saunce disparagement.  
 By which device, the sisters kinder twind,  
 And thereto trothe for aye, each other mind.  
 For which loves knott, Vipoto they invite



Of their magnific Macoasines take a sight !  
 Danus them usshering, so in they went,  
 Conducted by the bownteous President :  
 Whoe shewing th' ample buildinges firme, faire hie,  
 Gave to demaund applause in everie eie.

Vipoio tho, went to the faire quadrangle,  
 To reade what embleams kervers arts theare handle !  
 But first did Samforde call ! and Daniel fett !  
 Twoe sweetlie singinge swannes of Somerset !  
 Of all which embleames, that shee gann behold,  
 Wheare a younge man doth wrastel with an old.  
 Demaunds he Poetes what theareof befel !  
 But they had all forgott, or could not tell.  
 Wherefore shee th' poets idelnes did blame,  
 For not recordinge th' art so full of fame,  
 Which bears the prototype of soveraigntie  
 Of England over France in misterie :  
 Which thinge they feare, as thinges of prophecie,  
 Catch theire designe unwares yet certainelie.

This English Burrel hight, a Cornish man,  
 To the late Henry th'eight a gardian,  
 Beinge in daringe yoath esteem'd so stronge  
 As that great Kinge, to trie his force did longe.  
 Whome Burrel spar'd because hee was the Kinge,  
 Ne (wrestlinge with him) woold not cast, or wringe ;  
 Which caus'd the Kinge thus saie, Burrel, I heard  
 That thow the strongest weart of all my gard ;  
 I doe not find yt so ; whereat some said,  
 Hee knowes it is the Kinge with whome hee plaid :  
 Ells mote yoe quicklie feele him veresie,  
 That this is Cornish Burrel certainlie.

So, at the next concert Kinge Henry feeles,  
 Burrel had strength, but not so many weeles.  
 Long after this, (Kinge Henry dead and gone)  
 And his brown daughter Marie in his throne,  
 And Burrel strooken old, yet of her gard,  
 And Philip weddinge her, becom her ward,  
 Hither hee brought a Frenchman, goodlie, younge,  
 Whoe in the feates of wrestlinge, prov'd so stronge  
 As foil'd, or cast downe all, or most her gard,  
 And no man fownd (as yet) coold him discard.  
 In so much that King Philip joid as much,  
 As Marie at her gards reproch did grutch.  
 Which urg'd old Burrel make a suite to her,  
 That he mote trie Kinge Philipes wrasteler.

Ha, quod the Queene, thine age hath thee dispoild,  
 Ells I presume hee shoold not scape unfoild.



But when before the princes in they came,  
 In manner naked (as in thold embleame)  
 With baggs calld collers on their showlders plact,  
 And to the concert either graplinge fast,  
 Old Burrel aged neere three score yeeres and tenn,  
 Rowzd his stiff jointes, and Cornish stratagem :  
 Wheare thus befell, that Burrel at the last,  
 Tore out the Frenches showlder blead, and cast,  
 So as the man was carried from the place,  
 Quite vanquish'd, whereof died in litle space.  
 Lo ! heere their embleam in this monument,  
 The rest depends on future contingent.

This storie by Vipoio thus reviv'd,  
 Which ells had by olivion binn depriv'd ;  
 Shee Danus willd to lead waie to Saint Maries,  
 Wheare oft thus chiden tu prævaricaris,  
 From thence hee ledd to the greate librarie,  
 Thence ore the schooles to the large gallerie ;  
 Which place at first invites her to content,  
 As solitarines in it was pent :  
 But soone that turn'd to this consideration,  
 That manie witts mote breed braines inundation,  
 Sith manie heads as manie senses breede,  
 As manie purposes as sowne seede,  
 Wheareof some good, some badd (lock'd in one cell)  
 Witts modell through their visnomies to spell.

The search shee made through the Vatican rowt,  
 For Lidgate ! Spencer ! Daniel ! quite left out,  
 Though so ringe on that high ideal spirit,  
 Which none of them send Germanists inherit :  
 Which urg'd her sweare, and confidentlie frett,  
 Never was Germaniste sowne poet yett,  
 Though Camden takes one plaienge Furæfar,  
 Prints twice as own, a poet of Exeter ;  
 Whence, shee the painters pensills did accuse,  
 Sith knewe not good to chouse, ne badd refuse :  
 Wherefore downe flunge them (meere Pieridistes)  
 Void of ideal light, dull skulld Lanists,  
 But Chaucer shee bids com down off his spheare !  
 And 'mongst the Laureat poets waite on her !"

Mr. Knight conjectures that Shakespeare alludes to the death of Robert Greene, who deceased in 1592, in a condition that might truly be called beggary. There is much reason in this, although the

Midsummer Night's Dream was not written till two years afterwards; for in the year 1594 was published *Greene's Funeralls*, from which Mr. Collier quotes the following passage:—

“ For judgement Jove, for *learning* deepe he still Apollo seemde;  
For floent tongue, for eloquence, men Mercury him deemde;  
For curtesie suppose him Guy, or Guyons somewhat lesse.  
His life and manners, though I would, I cannot halfe express:  
Nor mouth, nor minde, nor Muse can halfe declare,  
His life, his love, his laude, so excellent they were.”

In the year 1594 was also published Greene's last work, written in conjunction with Thomas Lodge, entitled *The Looking Glass for London and England*. Chalmers has dwelt upon an animosity which is said to have existed between Lodge and Shakespeare: and, if this were the case, we may perhaps be justified in conjecturing that the “thrice three Muses” mourned, or rather were intended to mourn, on the last production of a famous writer which was wholly unworthy of his pen. The above-mentioned work is, indeed, very poor; and, as far as Greene was concerned, the productions of his learning might then be truly said to be “late deceased in beggary.” This conjecture will also bear out the apprehension of Theseus:—

“ That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with the nuptial ceremony.”

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the term *critical* is here used in the sense of *censuring*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“ Have me excused if I speak amiss ;  
My will is good.”

“ I CANNOT forbear,” says Mr. Hunter, “ to make one or two remarks on editorial duties in general, and particularly on such duties as applied to Shakespeare. We see the value of the old copies, and the wisdom of reading them, rather than the sophisticated text which the modern editors have given us, if we desire to know what Shakespeare really left to us. They have, to be sure, some very strange corruptions ; but then the very strangeness and the grossness work their own correction. We see, at once, that Shakespeare did not write what is set down for him ; and we can often see at once what he did write, through the same disguise ; while the modern editors, by the application of their principles, too frequently lay suspicion asleep, giving us a text which, without being very bad, is not so good as that which this fine spirit had itself bequeathed to us. It is quite manifest, therefore, that in any modern edition, the old copies should form the basis of any new text, to the entire exclusion, in the first instance, of the text of Rowe, and I am sorry to add, of every other editor who has yet followed him.”

To these just remarks we have little to add. Every one who has critically studied the text of Shakespeare must be convinced of the truth of Mr. Hunter's statement, and we are glad to fortify an



opinion, which we could wish were more generally adopted, by the authority of so distinguished a writer. But we might with propriety proceed further, and say that no alteration from the original text of Shakespeare's plays is justifiable, unless it can be clearly proved that the typographical error which such an alteration must or ought necessarily to imply, could have been committed by the compositor of the time. We are convinced that this is really the only safe method to be adopted, and we most strongly deprecate the wholesale system of conjectural emendation employed by Theobald and a few other editors.

We will now venture to offer our readers a few observations on some passages of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

ACT I. Sc. I.

“ Ah me ! for aught that ever I could read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth.”

A similar passage occurs in Shakespeare's poem of *Venus and Adonis*, where he represents Venus, after the loss of her lover, denouncing her vengeance on the unlucky passion : —

“ Since thou art dead, lo ! here I prophesy,  
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend ;  
It shall be waited on with jealousy,  
Find sweet beginning but unsavoury end ;  
Ne'er settled equally to high or low ;  
That all love's pleasures shall not match his woe.  
It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud,  
And shall be blasted in a breathing while,  
The bottom poison and the top o'erstrew'd  
With sweets, that shall the sharpest sight beguile :  
The strongest body shall it make most weak,  
Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak.”



The fifth line satisfactorily shows that the alteration which has been made from *love* to *low* in another line is perfectly correct:—

“ O cross! too high to be enthrall’d to low !”

It cannot, however, be denied, that Lysander’s speech would be improved by the omission of the interpositions of *Hermia*. It has been so printed by Dodd and Planché.

In the second folio we have *Hermia* in the place of the words *Ah me*, which the first folio omits altogether. The remainder of this line has been used by Butler, in *Hudibras*, Part I. Canto 3. l. 1026.

An old proverb which we find in MS. Sloane, No. 1825, is to the same effect:—

“ Y shal you say, and well y can,  
The tide of love abidith no man.”

ACT I. Sc. 1.

“ If thou lov’st me, then  
Steal forth thy father’s house to-morrow night;  
And in the wood, a league without the town,  
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,  
To do observance to a morn of May,  
There will I stay for thee.”

At the present day the celebration of the first of May is chiefly confined to those of our fellow creatures who employ themselves the remainder of the year in sweeping chimneys, and on that day recreate themselves with parading through all places with rude music, and a “jack in a green” habitation made expressly for the purpose. Formerly, the case was very different; and princes even “performed their observation.” Churchyarde published one of his works on the first of May; to ensure its success, we

suppose, as the subject of the volume was political. The reign of puritanical doctrines contributed, perhaps, in a great measure to the neglect of observing this custom; and in MS. Harl. 1221, is a curious poem against it, entitled, "A maypooles speech to a traveller," from which we extract the following:—

" Men, women, children, one a heap,  
Do sing and dance, and frisk and leap,  
Yea, drums and drunkards one a rout,  
Before me make a hideous shout,  
Whose loud alarum and blowing cries  
Do fright the earth and pierce the skies.

" Hath holy Pope his holy guard,  
So have I to it watch and ward,  
For where it's noysed that I am come,  
My followers summoned are with drum,  
I have a mighty rank anew,  
The scum of all the rascall crew.

" Of fiddlers, pedlers, fayle scape slaves,  
Of tinkers, turncoats, tospot knaves,  
Of thieves and scapethrifts many a one,  
With bouncing Bess and jolly Joan,  
Of idle boys and journeymen,  
And vagrants that the country run.

" The hobby horse doth hither prance,  
Maid Marrian and the Morris dance,  
My summons fetcheth far and near  
All that can swagger, swil, and swear,  
All that can dance, and drab, and drink,  
They run to me as to a sink."

ACT I. Sc. 1.

" Call you me fair ! that fair again unsay.  
Demetrius loves you, fair : O, happy fair !  
Your eyes are lode-stars ; and your tongue's sweet air,  
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,  
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear !  
Sickness is catching ; O, were favour so,  
Your words I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go ;

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody."

We print this as it stands in the first quarto, without preserving the orthography of the time. Some discussion has arisen on the meaning of the seventh line, and Hanmer has altered it to

"Your's would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go."

The second folio, however, gives another reading, which is doubtlessly the genuine one—

"Your words I'd catch, fair Hermia, ere I go."

For *favour* is not here used, as all editors and commentators have supposed, in the sense of *countenance*, but evidently in the common acceptation of the term—"O, were favour so," i. e., favour in the eyes of Demetrius; a particular application of a wish expressed in general terms. The reading of the second folio renders the whole passage perfectly intelligible.

Something similar to a portion of the above may be found in Grange's Garden, 1577:—

"Eache leafe upon the tree, the grasse upon the ground,  
The Hathorne buddes new sprung, on earth what may be found,  
Doth yeelde as pleasant scentes, as nature can devise:  
All things in lusty greene, appeares displaying wise.  
And every bird that lives, then strayneth forth his voyce:  
So that of each delight, each man may take his choyce."

#### ACT. I. SC. 1.

"And in the wood, where often you and I  
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,  
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel *sweet*,  
There my Lysander and myself shall meet:  
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,  
To seek new friends and *stranger companies*."

Here again an unnecessary alteration has been made from the original. In all the early editions we have this passage as follows:—

“ And in the wood, where often you and I  
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,  
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel *swell'd*,  
There my Lysander and myself shall meet :  
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,  
To seek new friends and *strange companions*.”

We owe the alteration to Theobald; but it is very evident that the author could not have written it so, for it would be impossible in that case to account for the corruption. If Shakespeare had written *sweet* and *stranger companies*, it is very improbable that these words could have been so changed either by the actors or printers. Moreover, the antithesis in the first of these instances is a strong argument in favour of the old reading—

“ *Emptying* our bosoms of their counsel *swell'd*.”

Our ears have perhaps become familiarized with Theobald's version; but it is safer to receive Shakespeare's own words, even if, at first hearing, they do not seem quite so harmonious as the others.

#### ACT I. Sc. 2.

“ *Quin.* Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

*Flu.* Here, Peter Quince.

*Quin.* You must take Thisby on you.

*Flu.* What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

*Quin.* It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

*Flu.* Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

*Quin.* That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.”

Flute is proud of his approaching signs of manhood, which he calls a beard. Cf. Lily's *Endimion*, 1591 :



“*Top.* I pray thee feel on my chin, something pricketh me. What dost thou feel or see?

*Epi.* There are three or four little hairs.

*Top.* I pray thee call it my beard. How shall I be troubled when this young spring shall grow to a great wood.”

It is scarcely necessary to observe that the female characters were at this period performed by boys.

ACT I. SC. 2.

“*Bot.* Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

*Quin.* Why, what you will.

*Bot.* I will discharge it in either your straw-coloured beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-coloured beard, your perfect yellow.

*Quin.* Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced.”

Sanderson, in his *Diary*, complains of the sad extravagance of his apprentice in the way of barbers: in a letter to a friend, he informs him that “the very cuttinge of his sharpe chinne hath cost me to the barber more then I spent in myselfe in seven years.” Mr. Repton has printed a tract expressly on the subject of the different forms in which beards were worn, some of which are exceedingly fantastic. A pun is concealed in the term of *French-crown*; in MS. Harl. 280, fol. 81, mention is made of “French-crowne gould.” A curious song on beards may be found in MS. Harl. 6931, but allusions to the different colours of them are not very numerous. See, however, Middleton’s *Works* by the Rev. A. Dyce, vol. i. p. 259.

ACT I. SC. 2.

“*Bot.* We will meet; and there we may rehearse most *obscenely* and courageously. Take pains; be perfect; adieu.

*Quin.* At the duke’s oak we meet.

*Bot.* Enough; hold or cut bowstrings.”

Bottom the weaver, like Mrs. Malaprop in a later production, is continually using his "select words, so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced;" at the same time, seeming to think that "if he reprehends anything in this world, it is the use of his oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs." He here uses the word *obscenely* for *obscurely*. Shakespeare is fond of making his clowns miscall their words.

## ACT II. SC. I.

"Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish spirite,  
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are you not he  
That fright the maidens of the village;  
*Skim milk*; and sometimes labour in the quern,  
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;  
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;  
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?  
*Those that Hobgoblin call you*, and sweet Puck,  
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:  
Are not you he?"

In Randolph's *Amyntas* there is an allusion to the fairies skimming milk:—

"I know no haunts I have but to the dairy,  
To skim the milk-bowls like a liquorish fairy."

Robin's name of Hobgoblin is mentioned in MS. Harl. 6482. The whole passage is worth transcription:—

"Of spirits called Hobgoblins, or Robin Goodfellowes.

"These kinde of spirits are more familiar and domestical then the others, and for some causes to us unknown, abode in one place more then in another, so that some never almost depart from some particular houses, as though they were their proper mansions, making in them sundry noises, rumours, mockeries, gawds and jests, without doing any harme at all, and some have heard them play at gitterns and Jews' harps, and ring bells and make answer to those that call them, and speake with certain signes,

laughters and merry gestures, so that those of the house come at last to be so familiar and well acquainted with them that they fear them not at all. But in truth, if they had free power to put in execution their mallicious desire, we should finde these pranks of theirs not to be jests, but earnest indeed, tending to the destruction both of our body and soul, but their power is so restrained and tyed that they can passe no further then to jests and gawds, and if they do any harm at all, it is certainly very little, as by experience hath been founde."

ACT II. Sc. 2.

" And never, since the *middle-summer's spring*."

The " middle-summer's spring" means probably the beginning of midsummer. In Churchyard's *Charitie*, 1595, we have a similar expression:—

" A warmer time in better tune may bring  
This hard cold age, when comes a summer spring."

*Spring* is here used for *beginning*.

ACT II. Sc. 2.

" And, in the *spiced* Indian air, by night,  
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;  
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,  
Marking th' embarked traders on the flood."

Cf. *Bartholomæus de Glanvilla*, 1582, fol. 252:—  
" As the rivers there are very many, so are they very great, through whose watery overflowing it commeth to passe that in the moyst groundes, the force of the sunne approaching, ingendreth or bringeth forth all things in great quantitie and seemeth almost to fill the whole world *with spice* and precious stones, of which it aboundeth more than all other countries of the world."

ACT II. Sc. 2.

" Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:  
It fell upon a little western flower,

Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
And maidens call it Love-in-Idleness."

"Viola tricolor, hart's ease; herba Trinitatis, herba clavellata, paunsies, love-in-idleness."—MS. Sloan. 797, fol. 61.

ACT II. Sc. 2.

"You draw me, you hardhearted adamant,  
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart  
Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,  
And I shall have no power to follow you."

"The Adamant is a stone of Inde, small and rare, in colour like to iron, but in clear reflection and representation of image more christal like. It yeeldeth or giveth place to nothing. Dioscorides saith that it is called the stone of reconsiliation and of love,"—*A Grene Forest, by John Maplet, 1567.* Again, in the same book we read that "The lodestone draweth iron to it, even as one lover coveteth and desireth another." Lord Bacon says,—"I read that in nature there be two kinds of motions or appetites in sympathy; the one of iron to the adamant for perfection; the other of the vine to the stake for sustentation."

ACT II. Sc. 2.

"And even for that do I love you the more.  
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,  
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.  
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
Unworthy as I am, to follow you,  
What worsser place can I beg in your love  
(And yet a place of high respect with me),  
Than to be used as you use your dog?"

We suppose Shakespeare here alludes to the old proverb :—



“ A spaniel, a woman, and a wallnut tree,  
The more they’re beaten, the better still they be.”

ACT. III. SC. 1.

“ *Bot.* Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them, to make me afeard.

*Re-enter* SNOUT.

*Snout.* O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

*Bot.* What do you see? *you see an ass’s head of your own; do you?”*

“ It is plain by Bottom’s answer,” says Johnson, “ that Snout mentioned an ass’s head.” No such thing; the phrase is a common one of the time. Mrs. Quickly, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, says, “ You shall have a fool’s head of your own.”

ACT III. SC. 1.

“ The ousel-cock, so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill;  
The throstle with his note so true;—  
The wren with little quill;

“ The finch, the sparrow, and the lark;  
The plain-song cuckoo gray,  
Whose note full many a man doth mark,  
And *dares* not answer, nay;—

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry ‘ cuckoo ’ never so ? ”

Why Bottom should here enumerate these birds is not very evident, except we believe, as Aristotle has assured us, that all small birds hate the ass. It is unnecessary to remind the reader of a belief that Shakespeare very frequently refers to, and which was prevalent in his day, viz. the identity of the cuckoo’s note, and a certain term of great disgrace. The meaning of the last line of Bottom’s song has not been satisfactorily explained. It refers to an opinion then

common, that the unfaithfulness of a woman to her husband was always guided by a destiny which no human power could avert. In *Grange's Garden*, 1577, we have an allusion to this :—

“ And playing thus with wanton toyes, the cuckow bad good  
morow,  
Alas, thought I, a token 'tis for me to live in sorrow ;  
Cuckow sang he, Cuckow sayd I, what destiny is this ?  
Who so it heares, he well may thinke it is no sacred blisse.  
Alas, quoth she, what caun have you, as yet thus for to say,  
In Cuckow time few have a charme, to cause his tongue to stay ;  
Wherefore,  
Content yourselfe as well as I, let reason rule your minde,  
As cuckolds come by destiny, so cuckowes sing by kinde.”

Compare also Nicolls' poem on the cuckoo, 1607,  
p. 12 :—

“ Meanetime Dan Cuckow, knowing that his voice  
Had no varietie, no change, no choice :  
But through the wesand pipe of his harsh throate,  
Cri'd only Cuckow, that prodigious note !”

Again, in *Wit's Recreations*, 12mo. Lond. 1641 :—

“ Thy stars gave thee the cuckold's diadem :  
If thou wert born to be a wittol, can  
Thy wife prevent thy fortune ? foolish man !”

And in a note in the English translation of Ariosto's *Satires*, 1608, we have a singular tale on the same subject : “ Many hold of opinion that to be a cuckold is destiny and not their wives dishonesties, as a good fellow in the world said to a friend of his, who telling him he was sorry that so honest a man as he should be abused as he was, seeing the fault was his wives and not his. I thanke you, neighbour, replied he, for your good conceit of me, but I assure you I think it was not her own fault, but rather

mine own fortune that made me a cuckold ; for I verily believe whosoere I had married, would have bin naught as well as she. Nay then, quoth his neighbour, if you think so, God forbid I should dissuade you from an opinion you hold so confidently, and so left him."

ACT III. Sc. 2.

" And the country proverb known,  
That every man should take his own,  
In your waking shall be shown :  
    Jack shall have Jill ;  
    Nought shall go ill ;  
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well."

*Well* is so bad a rhyme to *ill*, that Steevens proposes to read *still*. In Heywood's *Epigrammes upon Proverbes*, 1567, we have,—

" All shal be wel, Jacke shal have Gil;  
Nay, nay ; Gill is wedded to Wil."

This shows that the common reading is quite correct.

ACT IV. Sc. 1.

*Tita*. " Or, say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

*Bot*. Truly, a peck of provender ; I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks, I have a great desire to a *bottle of hay* : good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow."

A *bottle* of hay was not merely a *bundle*, but some *measure* of that " provender." So in the *Choyce Poems*, 12mo. Lond. 1661, p. 43,—

" Do you at livery stand, or by the bottle  
Get you your hay, your oats by peck or pottle ?"

ACT IV. Sc. I.

" I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream,—past the wit of man to say what dream it was :—man is but an ass, if

he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was,—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen; man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was."

Warner, in his manuscript annotations on Shakespeare, says, that "this seems to be a humorous allusion to the Scripture account of the happiness of a future state." We should not think that any such allusion is intended, and there is no necessity for the conjecture. We may mention here that Warner's collections on Shakespeare have recently been added to the library of the British Museum. He appears to have been very liberal in communicating these collections to his friends, and we have lately seen a letter from Steevens to Garrick, dated July 28th, 1771, in which he applies for the loan of Warner's MS. annotations on the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, then in Garrick's possession, lent to him by the author himself.

ACT V. SC. 1.

"A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
And his love Thisbe: very tragical mirth."

Dunston Gale, in 1596, wrote a poem called *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the earliest known printed edition of which appeared in 1617. There is no allusion whatever to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A copy of a later edition (viz. 1626, sometimes found with Greene's *Arbasto*) is in Malone's Collection, No. 295. It is very rare, and the poetry is execrable. Mr. Collier has given some extracts in his *Catalogue of the Bridgewater Library*.



We shall perhaps offer an acceptable service to those who have no opportunity of referring to the early editions of Shakespeare's plays, by here reprinting the first part of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* *verbatim* from the earliest quarto, which appeared in the year 1600, under the following title,—  
*A Midsommer Nights Dreame, as it hath beene sundry times publickely acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain his servants. Written by William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Thomas Fisher, and are to be sould at his shoppe at the signe of the White Hart, in Fleete Streete.*

“ Now faire *Hippolita*, our nuptiall hower  
 Draws on apase : fower happy daies bring in  
 An other Moone : but oh, me thinks, how slow  
 This old Moone wanes ! She lingers my desires,  
 Like to a Stepdame, or a dowager,  
 Long withering out a yong mans reueneue.

*Hip.* Fower daies will quickly sleepe themselues in night :  
 Fower nights will quickly dreame away the time :  
 And then the Moone, like to a siluer bowe,  
 Now bent in heauen, shall beholde the night  
 Of our solemnities.

*The.* Goe *Philostrate*,  
 Stirre vp the *Athenian* youth to merriments,  
 Awake the peart and nimble spirit of mirth,  
 Turne melancholy foorth to funerals :  
 The pale companion is not for our pomp.  
*Hyppolita*, I woo'd thee with my sword,  
 And wonne thy loue, doing thee iniuries :  
 But I will wed thee in another key,  
 With pompe, with triumph, and with reueling.

*Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia, and Lysander, and Helena, and Demetrius.*

*Ege.* Happy be *Theseus*, our renowned duke.

*The.* Thankes good *Egeus*. Whats the newes with thee ?

*Ege.* Full of vexation, come I, with complaint  
 Against my childe, my daughter *Hermia*.

*Stand forth Demetrius.*

My noble Lord,  
This man hath my consent to marry her.

*Stand forth Lisander.*

And my gracious Duke,  
This man hath bewitcht the bosome of my childe,  
Thou, thou *Lysander*, thou hast giuen her rimes,  
And interchang'd loue tokens with my childe :  
Thou hast, by moone-light, at her windowe sung,  
With faining voice, verses of faining loue,  
And stolne the impression of her phantasie :  
With bracelets of thy haire, rings, gawdes, conceites,  
Knackes, trifles, nosegaies, sweete meates (messengers  
Of strong preuailement in vnhardened youth)  
With cunning hast thou filcht my daughters heart,  
Turnd her obedience (which is due to mee)  
To stubborne harshnesse. And, my gracious Duke,  
Be it so, she will not here, before your Grace,  
Consent to marry with *Demetrius*,  
I beg the auncient priuiledge of *Athens* :  
As she is mine, I may dispose of her :  
Which shall be, either to this gentleman,  
Or to her death ; according to our lawe,  
Immediatly provided, in that case.

*The.* What say you, *Hermia* ? Be aduis'd, faire maid.  
To you, your father should be as a God :  
One that compos'd your beauties : yea and one,  
To whome you are but as a forme in wax,  
By him imprinted, and within his power,  
To leaue the figure, or disfigure it :  
*Demetrius* is a worthy gentleman.

*Her.* So is *Lisander*. *The.* In himselfe he is :  
But in this kinde, wanting your fathers voice,  
The other must be held the worthier.

*Her.* I would my father lookt but with my eyes.

*The.* Rather your eyes must, with his iudgement, looke.

*Her.* I doe intreat your grace, to pardon mee.  
I know not by what power, I am made bould ;  
Nor how it may concerne my modesty,  
In such a presence, here to plead my thoughts :  
But I beseech your Grace, that I may knowe  
The worst that may befall mee in this case,  
If I refuse to wed *Demetrius*.

*The.* Either to dy the death, or to abiure,  
For euer, the society of men.  
Therefore, faire *Hermia*, question your desires,

Knowe of your youth, examine well your blood,  
 Whether (if you yeelde not to your fathers choyce)  
 You can endure the liuery of a Nunne,  
 For aye to be in shady cloyster, mew'd  
 To liue a barraine sister all your life,  
 Chaunting faint hymnes, to the colde fruitlesse Moone.  
 Thrise blessed they, that master so there bloode,  
 To vndergoe such maiden pilgrimage :  
 But earthlyer happy is the rose distild,  
 Then that, which, withering on the virgin thorne,  
 Growes, liues, and dies, in single blessednesse.

*Her.* So will I growe, so liue, so die my Lord,  
 Ere I will yield my virgin Patent, vp  
 Vnto his Lordshippe, whose vnwished yoake  
 My soule consents not to giue souerainty.

*The.* Take time to pawse, and by the next newe moone,  
 The sealing day, betwixt my loue and mee,  
 For euerlasting bond of fellowshippe,  
 Vpon that day either prepare to dye ;  
 For disobedience to your fathers will,  
 Or else to wed *Demetrius*, as he would,  
 Or on *Dianaes* altar to protest,  
 For aye, austeritie and single life.

*Deme.* Relent, sweete *Hermia*, and, *Lysander*, yeeld  
 Thy crazed title to my certaine right.

*Lys.* You haue her fathers loue, *Demetrius* :  
 Let me haue *Hermias* : doe you marry him.

*Egeus.* Scornefull *Lysander*, true, he hath my loue :  
 And what is mine, my loue shall render him.  
 And she is mine, and all my right of her  
 I doe estate vnto *Demetrius*.

*Lysand.* I am my Lord, as well deriv'd as hee,  
 As well possess : my loue is more than his :  
 My fortunes euery way as fairely rankt  
 (If not with vantage) as *Demetrius* :  
 And (which is more then all these boasts can be)  
 I am belou'd of beautilous *Hermia*.  
 Why should not I then prosecute my right ?  
*Demetrius*, Ile auouch it to his heade,  
 Made loue to *Nedars* daughter, *Helena*,  
 And won her soule : and she (sweete Ladie) dotes,  
 Deuoutly dotes, dotes in Idolatry,  
 Vpon this spotted and inconstant man.

*The.* I must confesse, that I haue heard so much ;  
 And, with *Demetrius*, thought to haue spoke thereof :  
 But, being ouer full of selfe affaires,



My minde did loose it, But *Demetrius* come,  
 And come *Egeus*, you shall goe with mee :  
 I haue some priuate schooling for you both.  
 For you, faire *Hermia*, looke you arme your selfe,  
 To fit your fancies, to your fathers will ;  
 Or else, the Law of *Athens* yeelds you vp  
 (Which by no meanes we may extenuate)  
 To death, or to a vowe of single life.

Come my *Hyppolita* : what cheare my loue ?

*Demetrius* and *Egeus* goe along :

I must employ you in some businesse,  
 Against our nuptiall, and conferre with you  
 Of some thing, nerely that concernes your selues.

*Ege.* With duety and desire, we follow you. *Exeunt.*

*Lysand.* How now my loue ? Why is your cheekes so pale ?  
 How chance the roses there doe fade so fast ?

*Her.* Belike, for want of raine : which I could well  
 Beteeme them, from the tempest of my eyes.

*Lis.* Eigh me : for aught that I could euer reade,  
 Could euer here by tale or history,  
 The course of true loue neuer did runne smoothe :  
 But either it was different in bloud ;

*Her.* O crosse ! too high to be intrald to loue.

*Lis.* Or else misgraffed, in respect of yeares ;

*Her.* O spight ! too olde to be ingag'd to young.

*Lis.* Or else, it stoode vpon the choyce of friends ;

*Her.* O hell, to choose loue by anothers eyes !

*Lys.* Or, if there were a sympathy in choyce,  
 Warre, death or sicknesse, did lay siege to it ;  
 Making it momentany, as a sound ;  
 Swift, as a shadowe ; short, as any dreame ;  
 Briefe, as the lightning in the collied night,  
 That (in a spleene) vnfolde both heauen and earth ;  
 And, ere a man hath power to say, beholde,  
 The iawes of darkenesse do deuoure it vp :  
 So quicke bright things come to confusion.

*Her.* If then true louers have bin euer crost,  
 It stands as an edict, in destiny :  
 Then let vs teach our triall patience :  
 Because it is a customary crosse,  
 As dewe to loue, as thoughts, and dreames, and sighes,  
 Wishes, and teares ; poore Fancies followers.

*Lys.* A good perswasion : therefore heare mee, *Hermia* :  
 I haue a widowe aunt, a dowager,  
 Of great reuenew, and she hath no childe :  
 From *Athens* is her house remote, seauen leagues :  
 And she respects mee, as her only sonne :



There, gentle *Hermia*, may I marry thee :  
 And to that place, the sharpe *Athenian* law  
 Can not pursue vs. If thou louest mee, then  
 Steale forth thy fathers house, to morrow night :  
 And in the wood, a league without the towne  
 (Where I did meete thee once with *Helena*  
 To do obseruance to a morne of May)  
 There will I stay for thee.

*Her.* My good *Lysander*,  
 I sweare to thee, by *Cupid's* strongest bowe,  
 By his best arrowe, with the golden heade,  
 By the simplicitie of *Venus* doues,  
 By that which knitteth soules, and prospers loues,  
 And by that fire, which burnd the *Carthage* queene,  
 When the false *Troian* vnder saile was seene,  
 By all the vowes that euer men haue broke,  
 (In number more then euer women spoke)  
 In that same place thou hast appointed mee,  
 To morrow truely will I meete with thee.

*Lys.* Keepe promise loue : looke, here comes *Helena*.

*Enter HELENA.*

*Her.* God speede faire *Helena* : whither away ?

*Hel.* Call you mee faire ? That faire againe vnsay.

*Demetrius* loues you faire : ô happy faire !

Your eyes are loadstarres, and your tongues sweete aire  
 More tunable than larke, to sheepeheards eare,  
 When wheat is greene, when hauthorne buddes appeare.

Sickness is catching : O, were fauour so,  
 Your words I catch, faire *Hermia*, ere I goe,  
 My eare should catch your voice, my eye, your eye,  
 My tongue should catch your tongues sweete melody.  
 Were the world mine, *Demetrius* being bated,  
 The rest ile giue to be to you translated.

O, teach mee how you looke, and with what Art,  
 You sway the motion of *Demetrius* heart.

*Her.* I frowne vpon him ; yet hee loues mee still.

*Hel.* O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skil.

*Her.* I giue him curses ; yet he giues mee loue.

*Hel.* O that my prayers could such affection mooue.

*Her.* The more I hate, the more he followes mee.

*Hel.* The more I loue, the more he hateth mee.

*Her.* His folly, *Helena*, is no fault of mine.

*Hel.* None but your beauty ; would that fault were mine.

*Her.* Take comfort ; he no more shall see my face :

*Lysander* and my selfe will fly this place.

Before the time I did *Lisander* see,  
 Seem'd *Athens* as a Paradise to mee.

O then, what graces in my loue dooe dwell,  
That hee hath turnd a heaven vnto a hell!

*Lys. Helen*, to you our mindes wee will vnfold:  
To morrow night, when *Phæbe* doth beholde  
Her siluer visage, in the watry glasse,  
Decking, with liquid pearle, the bladed grasse  
(A time, that louers flights doth still conceale)  
Through *Athens* gates, haue wee deuise'd to steale.

*Her.* And in the wood, where often you and I,  
Vpon faint Primrose beddes, were wont to lye,  
Emptying our bosomes, of their counsell sweld,  
There my *Lysander*, and my selfe shall meete,  
And thence, from *Athens*, turne away our eyes,  
To seeke new friends and strange companions.  
Farewell, sweete playfellow; pray thou for vs:  
And good lucke graunt thee thy *Demetrius*.  
Keepe word *Lysander*: we must starue our sight,  
From louers foode, till morrow deepe midnight.

*Exit HERMIA.*

*Lys.* I will my *Hermia*, *Helena* adieu:  
As you on him, *Demetrius* dote on you. *Exit LYSANDER.*

*Hele.* How happie some, ore othersome, can be!  
Through *Athens*, I am thought as faire as shee.  
But what of that? *Demetrius* thinkes not so:  
He will not knowe, what all, but hee doe know.  
And as hee erres, doting on *Hermia's* eyes:  
So I, admiring of his qualities.  
Things base and vile, holding no quantitie,  
Loue can transpose to forme and dignitie.  
Loue lookes not with the eyes, but with the minde:  
And therefore is winged *Cupid* painted blinde.  
Nor hath loues minde of any iudgement taste:  
Wings, and no eyes, figure, vnheedy haste,  
And therefore is loue said to bee a childe:  
Because, in choyce, he is so oft beguil'd,  
As waggish boyes, in game, themselues forswear:  
So, the boy, Loue, is periur'd euery where.  
For, ere *Demetrius* lookt on *Hermias* eyen,  
Hee hayld downe othes, that he was onely mine.  
And when this haile some heate, from *Hermia*, felt,  
So he dissolued, and shours of oathes did melt.  
I will goe tell him of faire *Hermias* flight:  
Then, to the wodde, will he, to morrow night,  
Pursue her: and for this intelligence,  
If I haue thanks, it is a deare expense:  
But herein meane I to enrich my paine,  
To haue his sight thither, and back againe."

## CHAPTER IX.

“ Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

*Ὡς αγαθον εστ' επωνυμιας πολλας εχειν.*

**I**F the authority of any living writer could be considered decisive on a disputed point of minute criticism, where there are neither established rules to lead to a right conclusion, nor sufficient evidence to decide positively on either side, then the opinion of the author of the “Curiosities of Literature” would deserve to be placed very high in the rank of such a recognition, and carry conviction to the minds of those who had not previously adopted another theory.

The dispute on the orthography of the name of our national bard is in this position. Mr. D'Israeli's opinion on the subject will therefore be considered by some an argument in itself. “While a drop of ink circulates in my pen,” exclaims the patriarch of English literature, “I shall ever loyally write the name of SHAKESPEARE.” Mr. D'Israeli is supported in this opinion by Messrs. Collier, Dyce, and Hunter; and every one will admit that these are good authorities in any question connected with Shakespearian literature.

The authority of opinion will not, however, in the present enquiring age, be considered adequate to establish the truth of any *πορισμα* of this nature.



The authority of tradition and of custom is of even inferior value, and it is perhaps better to leave their influence almost out of the scale, if we would judge correctly of the point at issue; and yet this constitutes the only evidence in support of one belief. We prefer confining ourselves to materials that are more easily determined by the usual criteria of error and truth.

Within the last two centuries the confidence which was formerly placed in the evidence of tradition has materially diminished, and in proportion as the necessity of having recourse to that method of communicating facts from age to age has decreased, so the accuracy with which that knowledge is preserved has declined. Numerous examples might be adduced in confirmation of this statement, and none would afford a more efficacious proof than the few traditional anecdotes which have been handed down to us respecting our great dramatic bard. For instance, there are very many who take for granted the alleged authenticity of Shakespeare's epitaph on Combe, the usurer; and yet a more palpable fabrication could scarcely have been committed, for the epitaph itself appeared in various collections, both before and after the time they were said to have been composed. There is every reason to believe that the epitaph in a more general form belongs to a much earlier period:—

“ Here lies ten in the hundred,  
In the ground fast ramm'd;  
'Tis an hundred to ten,  
But his soule is damm'd.”

The epitaph said to have been written by Shakespeare is differently constructed:—



“ Ten in the hundred lies here engrav’d,  
 ’Tis an hundred to ten his soul is not sav’d;  
 If any man ask who lies in this tombe?  
 Oh! Ho! quoth the devil, ’tis my John-a-Combe.”

The sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the usurer so that he never forgave it. But Combe’s will is fortunately preserved in the Prerogative Office at Doctors’ Commons, and affords most satisfactory proof to the contrary; for among the numerous legacies which he leaves is one “to Mr. William Shackspeare, five poundes.” The following version of the tale differs from the common one, and may be partly correct; it is taken from MS. No. 38, in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford:—

*“ On John Combe a covetous rich man, Mr. Wm. Shakspear wright this att his request while hee was yett liveing for his epitaph,*

Who lies in this tomb,  
 Hough, quoth the Devill, ’tis my son John a Combe.

*But being dead and making the poore his heiers, hee after wright this for his epitaph,*

Howere he lived, judge not.  
 John Combe shall never be forgott,  
 While poor hath memorye, for hee did gather  
 To make the poore his issue: hee their father  
 As record of his title and seede,  
 Did crowne him in his latter seede.

*Finis W. Shak.”*

The manuscript which contains this was not written long after the death of Shakespeare, and includes another anecdote respecting him, which we take the opportunity of inserting in this place:—

*“ Mr. Ben. Johnson and Mr. Wm. Shakespeare being merrye att a tavern, Mr. Jonson haveing begane this for his epitaph*

Here lies Ben Johnson that was once one.

*He gives it to Mr. Shakspear to make upp, who  
presently wrights*

Who while hee lived was a sloe thinge,  
And now being dead is nothinge."

We here see that Shakespeare's name is spelt in two different ways in the very same paragraph. No proof, indeed, is needed of the extreme licentiousness that was then admitted in the orthography, or rather cacography, of proper names. When Alexander Hume addressed his Treatise on Orthography (MS. Bib. Reg. 17 A. xi.) to King James, he saw "sik uncertentie in our men's wryting, as if a man wald indyte one letter to tuentie of our best wryteres, nae tuae of the tuentie without conference wald agree." When spelling was in such a state of misrule, can the written documents of the period be fairly referred to as authorities by which we can regulate orthography at the present day?

In the literary metropolis the name of our dramatic bard was pronounced SHAKE-SPEARE. There are many evidences of this, and in many of the early editions of the plays, the name is printed with a hyphen between the two syllables. Bancroft thus alludes to him:—

"Thou hast so used thy pen, or shook thy speare;  
That poets startle ———"

And we do not see that this example, which Mr. D'Israeli has given, is to be rejected, because it proceeds from a punster. One critic, indeed, says, that "we might with as much reason contend, on the authority of a certain pictorial pun, that the new translator of *Demosthenes de Corona* was once my

Lord *Broom* ;” and we really think that, although a picture is of much inferior evidence in a question of this nature than even a pun, that this fact would afford some proof that his lordship’s name was *pronounced* Broom. And this is what we wish to be admitted respecting the name of Shakespeare :—that by his educated contemporaries it was *pronounced* SHAKE-SPEARE.

“ The same surname,” says Fuller, “ hath been variously altered in writing, because time teacheth new orthography ;” and we are so far from supporting the common method of spelling Shakespeare’s name on account of the sanction which antiquity may give to it, that we should be quite willing to adopt the new system of writing it, provided it were not liable to cause a change in the pronunciation. The new\* method of spelling it, viz. *Shakspere*, has this objection ; for although the alteration in the orthoepy will not necessarily produce a corresponding change in the pronunciation with those who have been accustomed to the old system ; yet we cannot help thinking that there are many who receive their pronunciation from the orthography alone, and such persons will, undoubtedly, be liable to adopt the short and sharp pronunciation, if they depended upon the “ barbaric curt shock” of *Shakspere*. In the family documents at Stratford, the name is most frequently written *Shackspere*, and *Shackspere’s close*

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\* We say “ new,” because *Shakspere* is generally considered to be an innovation only recently suggested. Such, however, is not the case, for the critics of the last century nearly exhausted the subject in question, and ultimately decided on the correctness of the old orthography. In Bell’s edition of the works of Shakespeare, 1788, the odious cacography is adopted.



formed part of the property of Combe the usurer, as appears by his will. The pronunciation suggested by this mode of spelling is merely, as Mr. D'Israeli expresses himself, "the twang of a provincial corruption." Shall we pronounce the sacred name of Shakespeare as "rare Ben" and all his literary friends pronounced it, or be guided by the practice of the Stratford clowns? Shall we spoil half the allusions to our poet by adopting a provincial barbarism? When any contemporary poet speaks of the bard, the orthography is invariably *Shakespeare*, and the metre always shows that the first syllable must be pronounced long. Remember the following lines,

"What need my Shakespeare, for his honour'd bones,  
The labour of an age in piled stones?"

Then think of *Shakspeare*, and shudder at the transformation.

Sir Frederick Madden asks whether the simple Saxon *spere* is not "entitled to as much respect as the *speare* of the fourteenth century?" We suppose it is; but we really do not see how this admission can bear upon the present question. If we are permitted to separate the syllables, we shall find many evidences in favour of the old orthography. In the early editions of Shakespeare's plays, we read of a certain weapon designated by the word *speare*, which we now term *spear*, and our Saxon ancestors *spere*. But if we turn to the Saxon language for the other part of the surname, and combine it with *spere*, we should effect a very strange metamorphosis. It is, indeed, about as difficult to correct the cacography of a surname by appealing to the elements of the language,



“ As to o’re-walke a current roaring loud,  
On the unstedfast footing of a *speare*.”\*

These are some of the considerations which have led us to the conclusion that there is not a sufficient reason for the proposed elimination of the letter *e* in the first syllable of Shakespeare’s name.† With regard to the orthography of the second syllable, it is perfectly immaterial, as far as we can see, whether we adopt *spere*, *spear*, or *speare*; and because it is so, we are opposed to a deviation being made from the accustomed method of writing it, *speare*. “ Do not deviate,” observes a very eminent writer, “ into quirks and affectations, but spell the name as it was invariably spelt by his contemporaries.” Affectation of singularity curtailed the name of the reformer of Lutterworth to *Wiclif* on no authority whatever, and that same affectation has probably been the cause of the partial adoption of the new method of spelling the name of our great dramatic bard.

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And now, perhaps, the reader of the preceding pages will permit their author to say a few words for himself in extenuation of his presumption in entering a field of research already trodden by so many writers of established reputation, some of whom have devoted their lives to the sole study of this department of criticism.

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\* First Part of Henry IV. Act i. Sc. 3, old edition.

† The family name was originally so spelt. At least we find the name of *Shakespare* in MS. Burney, 360, in a handwriting of the time of Henry the Eighth.

This field is open to any one acquainted with the stores of Elizabethan literature; and it may be safely said, that there is scarcely a book belonging to that period that does not, more or less, afford illustration of some part of Shakespeare's works. A length of time must therefore necessarily elapse ere the immense extent for research which this literature offers can be completely exhausted, to the entire exclusion of the discovery of new illustrative matter. Hence have arisen the numerous commentaries on the plays of our great dramatist, few of which are without their use; and I, for one, cannot persuade myself to reject any illustrations whatever of his works, however minute and comparatively trifling they may appear; for when they contribute to enable us to understand more fully those wonderful productions, do they not raise themselves on a level tantamount with individual value? If there be any of my readers who agree with me in this, they may perhaps consider the materials here brought together worthy their consideration, and it will depend upon their verdict given on the present occasion whether I shall be induced to offer to their notice similar annotations on some of the other plays.

This, however, I may be allowed to say, without fear of being accused of egotism, that, whatever may be the opinion of the public respecting the merits of my little volume, I have always endeavoured to present the reader with new facts rather than adaptations of old ones, and have carefully avoided a system, now, I am sorry to say, much in practice, of appropriating the best and attacking the weaker points of the older commentators, who have, despite of the outcries of some modern critics against their

errors, done so much towards the right understanding of their author. "It would be well," observes Mr. Hunter, "if we who follow them, and profit so much by their labours, would imitate the research and industry of some of them, or could possess ourselves of the sagacity and genius of others." A capability, indeed, for research and minute criticism, and a power to philosophize the information so obtained, seldom occur united in the same mind.

Shakespeare was, of all modern authors, my first, and has ever been my greatest favourite. No encomium of his writings is now needed from any of his followers, for never perhaps was there an author whose memory is so generally idolized.\* It has always been my wish to be able to read his works with an ample knowledge of the language and manners of the times in which they were written; and fortified with this knowledge, to enter as far as possible into the spirit of those sublime compositions, undisturbed by the disputes of verbal critics. This, I am convinced, must be accomplished by full and judicious illustrations from contemporary writers; and continual reference to the early editions of the text itself. It may be said that no one person is sufficient for this, but surely the old adage of "What is every body's business, is no one's business," will not be considered applicable in the present case. Shakespeare's works are not yet in the position, as far as regards explanatory criticism, of those of the ancient

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\* He was not so general a favourite while he was living, but as early as the year 1662, Sir Thomas Browne, in one of his journeys, considered "Shakspear tombe in Stretford" an object worthy of an especial visit. See MS. Sloane, 1900, fol. 15.

classic writers of Greece and Italy, and we fortunately possess more ample materials for the regulation of his text than mere philological canons can afford. It is, then, a task due to the readers of Shakespeare from those who have it in their power, to assist as far as possible in placing these materials within their reach; and a belief that the few notes here collected together would contribute, in some degree, however trifling, towards this desirable end, was the motive that induced me to hazard an ordeal before the judgment of those who are much better able than myself to decide upon their relative utility. I have perhaps ventured too far, and may be destined to receive the punishment due to presumption in the discovery of my error. If I am doomed to this, at least I may hope that in after years, my unhappy attempt may escape the affliction of being converted into a testimony in favour of universal censure. Then, after a while, if it be permitted me, when the host of reviewers inimical to this class of learning shall have exhausted their criticisms,

“ I'll break my staff,  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,  
I'll drown my book.”





## APPENDIX.

[THE following curious tract, which is reprinted from a copy preserved in the British Museum, is of a political nature, but, at the same time, affords some illustration of the popular character of Robin Goodfellow, and is in many respects curious and interesting. The tract itself is printed on four leaves, in very small quarto.]

*“ The Midnight’s Watch, or Robin Goodfellow his serious observation ; Wherein is discovered the true state and strength of the kingdome as at this day it stands, without either Faction or Affaction. London, printed for George Lindsey, 1643.*

“ The harmlesse spirit and the merry, commonly knowne to the world by the name of Robin Goodfellow, having told his Fairy mistresse of fleering upon strangers Elves, and the tickling of her nose with her petulant finger, and receaving but frownes for his favours and checks for his counsailes, he grew weary of her service, and being as light of love as he was of care he resolved to visit her no more. The troubles and commotions in the upper world had wrought his thoughts another way, and in a serious humour one night he resolved to goe abroad, to observe the new courses and alterations of the world.

“ The first place he came at was Windsor, where he found a good part of the Army newly come from Redding, he heard them talke as confident of victory as if they had killed the Cavaliers already, he much admired the understanding and resolution of their Generall, and daring not to stay there any longer for feare he should be taken for a Malignant and be whipt, he made a swift dispatch for Oxford ; yet not farre from Windsor he met at the townes end many sentinells and incountered some Courts of Guard,

though they were men of warre he heard them much to desire peace, and freezing in the cold, Robin could not chuse but laugh, to hear them comfort one another by boasting in what hot service they had been.

“When he came to Oxford, the first place he ventured into was St. Maries Church, where indeed he found a convocation of many reverend heads, some whereof had lately departed from London for their consciences sake, and esteemed the freedome of their minds of a greater consequence then their Revenues: they much lamented the iniquity of the times, and wisht indeed (if they could be found) that abler and more learned men might supply their deserted places. Robbin wondred at the gravity of the men, who with great wisdom and moderation were discoursing amongst themselves from whence the first cause of these distempers did arise, and some imputing it to this, and some to that, Robin departing from them three times, sneezed out aloud, *Bishop, Bishop, Bishop.*

“From thence he come to Christchurch where he found a pack of cunning heads assembled together; these were men of another temper, and indeed they were the ottachous-ticons of the Kings, who whispered into his sacred eares all the ill counsells that they had contrived, Those were they that possessed him with impossible things, and induced him to believe them. They would tell him of great battels which were never fought, wherein he had the victory, and some conquests were told him to be atchieved by the Parliament wherein he received no losse at all. A band or two of men, have passed for a whole Army, and a Liter on the Thames for a whole fleet at Sea. Robbin much wondred that they being so neare unto him the influence of so Sacred a Majesty could work no better impression in their soules; and drawing neare unto the bed chamber he found His Majesty though in these distracted times yet full of native constancy, and tranquillity of mind, and secured better by his innocence then his Guard. With much joy and renowne he departed thence, and observing as he went (for it was past midnight) many a loose wench, in the armes of many of the Cavaliers, he gave

every wench as he passed by a blue and secret nip on the arm without awakening her. He heard among the sentinells, as he was departing from Oxford, of a great victory obtained by one Sir Ralph Hopton against a part of the Parliaments forces, wherein the Earle of Stamfords regiments were said to be quite routed, many of his Souldiers slaine, many taken prisoners and great store of Armes, and Ammunition with them, amongst which a great brasse piece on which the Crown and the Rose were stampd, was most remarkable. Robbin had a great desire to go thither himself, and to justifie the truth of so absolute a Victory. He had not gone as far as Ensham, but he espied the nine Muses in a Vinteners Porch crouching close together, and defending themselves as well as they could from the cold visitation of the winters night. They were extream poore, and (which is most strange) in so short an absence and distance from Oxford they were grown extreamly ignorant, for they took him for their Apollo, and craved his Power and Protection to support them. Robbin told them they were much mistaken in him, for though he was not mortal he was but of middle birth no more than they, they being the daughters of Memorie, and he the son of Mirth, but he bade them take comfort for that now in Oxford there was sure news of Peace and a speedy hope of their return to their discontinued habitations: at this they seemed with much joy to rouse up themselves, and did assure him that if what he reported did prove true, they would sing his praises throughout all generations. The Elf proud of such a favour in the name of Oberon did thank them, and did conjure them to perform it, and in the twinkling of an eye he conveyed himself to Salt-ash in Cornwall, where Sir R. Hopton's forces were quartered. He found the defeat given to the Earl of Stamford nothing so great as Fame in Oxford confirmed it to be. Collonell Ruthens regiment indeed was sorely shaken, and some of his men slain, and many taken prisoners. With a curious eye he observed what Arms and Ammunition were taken, and above all he had a labouring desire to see the brasse piece with the Crowne and the Rose on it, which so much dignified his



conquest: he searched up and down the Army, and in and about the Magazine, but he could not find it. At length despairing of what he looked for, the venterous Elf came into Sir Ralphs chamber, and finding him asleepe, and safe as Wine and Innocence, he dived into his pocket, and the first thing he took out, hee found to beare the impression of the Rose and Crowne, and it was a brave piece indeed, for it was a farthing token which was all peradventure that was in it. Robbin ashamed to see himself so deluded could not at the first but smile at the conceit, and putting it into its Magazine repenting himself of his journey, he did sweare that he would never trust fame, nor Pamphlet more, though printed in a thousand universities.

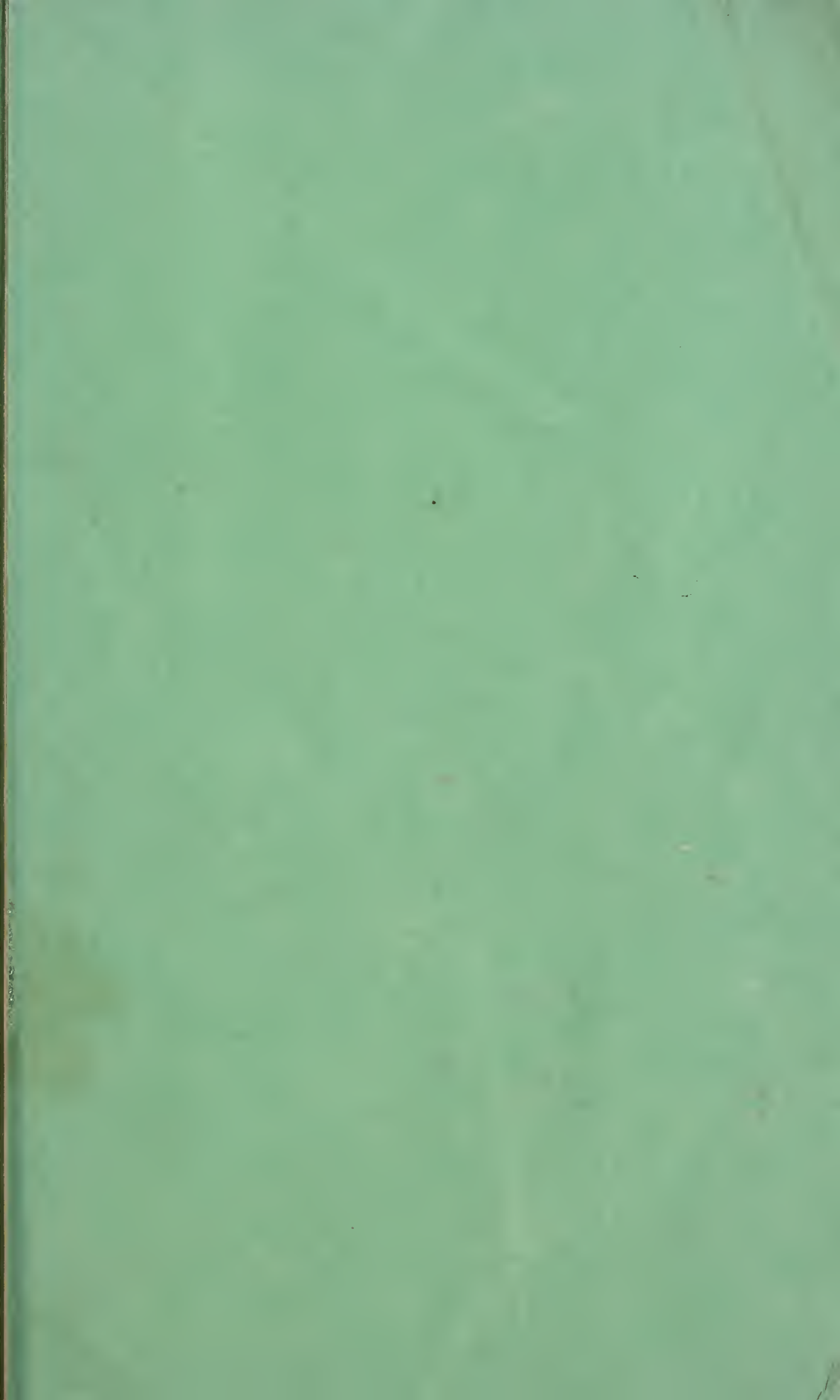
“From thence with much indignation, and more speed he flung away, and in a moment placed himselfe at Bristol, where he found the face of things just like the aire of an April morning, it smiled and it rained both at once, some were greedy of peace, and some againe were as eager of war; here some stood for the King, there others for the Parliament, the greater number was for the one side, but the better for the other. The husband was divided against the wife, the sister against the brother, and the son lifting forbidden hands against the father. Robin beholding so strange a division amongst people so neer in blood, wished himselfe againe in Fairy Land; for, said he, we have no such dinne, no such tumults, nor unnaturall quarrels, but all silence and oblivion and a perpetuall peace. And quickly abandoning the place, he in an instant came into Glocestershire, to a Towne called Tedbury, where the more to increase his misery he met with the spirit of faction and distempered zeale. This was the spirit that was accustomed to make a great hubbub in the churches to teare off the Surplice from the Ministers shoulders, and when the children were to be signed with the signe of the Crosse (like a Divell dispossessed) to teare himself for fury, and with great noyse and foaming to runne out of the Temple. This spirit would faine have persuaded Robin to turne Roundhead, and told him that they were the best sort of Christians: I, replied Robin, that is even as true as God

is in Glocestershire. As he was proceeding in his discourse, he was intercepted by a great noyse and tumult of people, who cried out flye, flye, flye. Amazed at the suddenesse of the cry, and the multitudes of the people that came thronging by; he looked about him to understand what the businesse was, he found it a company of people, whom flying from Cirencester, the ignorant fury of the sword had spared. Prince Rupert had newly entred the Towne, and having thrice summoned it, and they refusing to yeeld it into his hands, he seized on it by violence, and on his first entrance he burned a great part of the Towne, the shot from the windowes by the muskets of the Towne did wonderfully among his men, and he found no better meanes to prevent that mischief but by setting fire on the houses, there was a great overthrow, and Colonell Carre, and Colonell Massey, two Chiefe Commanders for the Parliament, were either slaine, or desperately wounded. Robin found this Prince to be a Gentleman of himselfe of a Civill and serious disposition, a man few in words, and very little beholding to Fame for the many strange reports he had delivered of him; affrighted at the thunder of his Armes, Robin dispatched himselfe from him with as much speed as the bullets flew from the mouth of his angry Canons, and on the first summons of the cocke he came to New-arke, where either through feare of some new designe upon them, or through some great cold they had taken, he found every man of the Earl of Newcastles garrison Souldiers to be sicke of a Palsey: loath to continue amongst those crasie people, with an invitive dispatch hee came to Pontefract, where he found the Earle of Newcastle, with the greatest part of his Armie gone towards Yorke, not so much through feare as it was suggested, but for complement rather, and to entertaine the Queene of England, who was expected to be either at Newcastle or at Yorke. He found the Army of the Recusants, though in many combats shaken and scattered, yet not to receive so great an overthrow as many tongues too credulously have voiced it.

“Neither did he find in York masse to be said in every

Church, it being crosse to the method of the close and subtill generation of the Papists to make a publick profession of their religion before they had fully perfected their intentions and by the strength of Authority made both the ends of their designes to meet together. Howsoever it being discovered that the warre which was pretended, for the maintaining of the King's Prerogative tended now indeed to the innovation of Religion, and to make the Papists appeare the Kings best Subjects, it hath turned many hearts and armed many hands against them. The newes of the Queens landing made Robbin so brisk, and so overcharged him with newes, that being as unable to contain it, as he was greedy to receive it, he could not take a full survey of Yorke, nor had the leisure to go unto Newcastle to discover what good service those foure Ships have done to hinder any malignant Vessells that come either from Holland or from Denmark, from landing at Newcastle; a mad vagary tooke him to come up to London, which the vagabond elfe performed with such a suddenesse that could he be discovered in his way, he would have proved rather the object of the memory then of the eye. The first place hee came into, it was a Conventicle of the Family of Love, it was then much about two of the Clock in the morning, and the Candles being put out, they were going from one exercise unto another. Robbin presented himself before them all, and seemed lusty as the spirit of youth when it it is newly awakened from the mornings sleep: the women were well contented to stay, but the men cryed out a Satyre, a Satyre, a Satyre, and thrusting them before them all tumbling headlong, down the staires together, they left him laughing to himself alone."







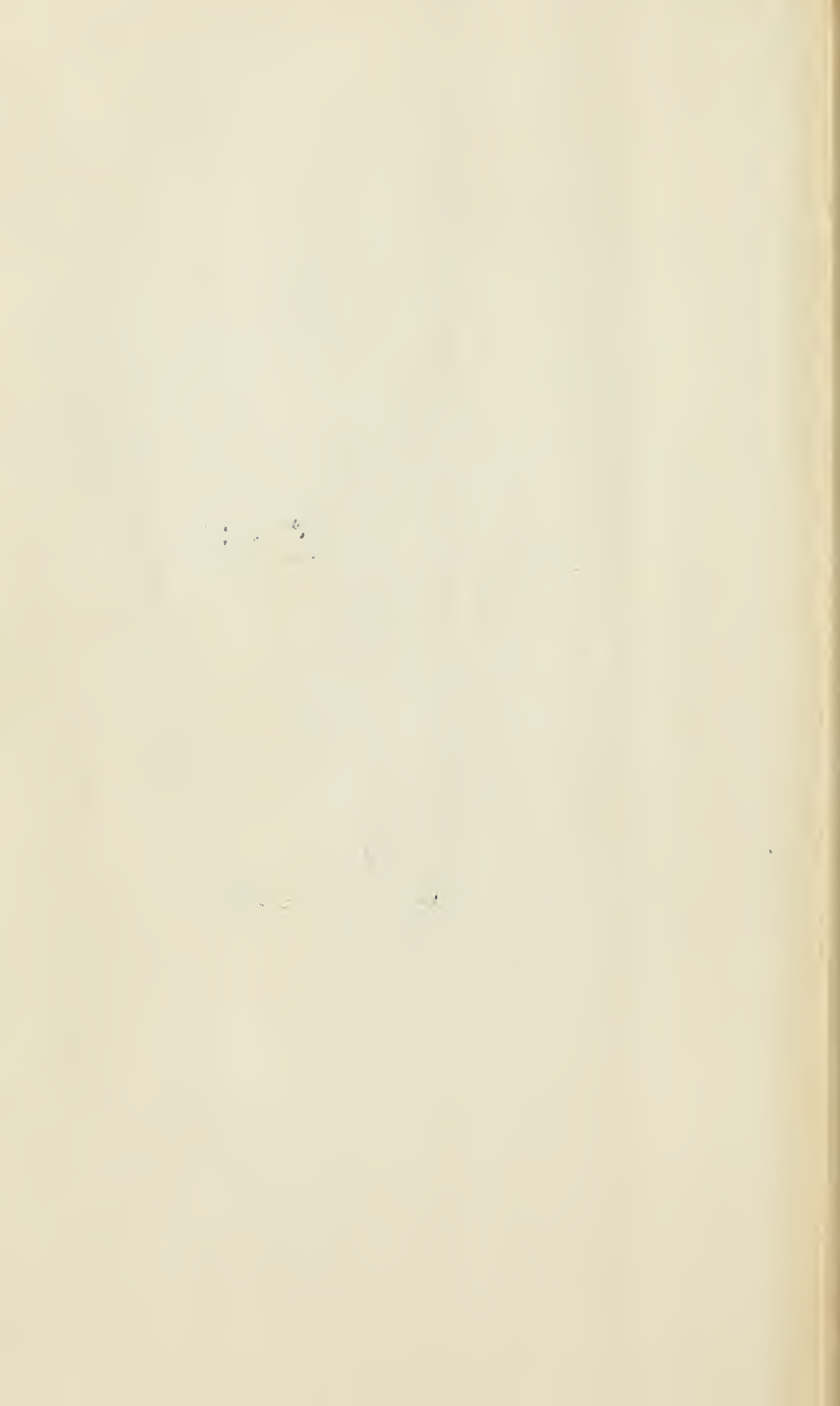


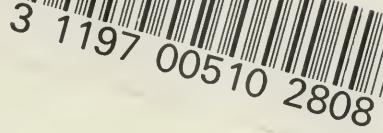










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